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CHILDREN OF THE WORLD. .

VOL. II.

CHILDREN OF THE WORLD.

A Nobel.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF
PAUL HEYSE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.
VOL. II.

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CHILDREN OF THE WORLD.

BOOK III. (*CONTINUED*).

CHAPTER IV.

It was striking two o'clock as they came out on to the square before the Castle.

"What shall we do next?" she asked.

"Our most important business now is to have as good a dinner as possible. I hope that the management of the Turkish tent may have improved since my time; when I was a student I used often to enjoy the celebrated *Kalte schale** here. Besides it is Sunday, and Charlottenburg knows very well what it owes to its neighbour Berlin."

When they entered the imposing-looking hotel, in the lower rooms of which a rather mixed company was enjoying coffee, a waiter met them, who after a hasty scrutiny of Toinette led them up to the upper story. In case they should wish to dine alone, they would find rooms which were still empty, and tables already laid.

"It is of no use," jested Edwin; "you must try and

* A cold beverage or soup made of beer or wine with grated bread, sugar, lemon, etc., or fruit such as strawberries, currants, etc.

bear the universal suspicion that we prefer a *tête-à-tête*. However, afterwards we can drink our coffee in the open air, and you will then have time to make the conquests which our exclusive dinner will have hindered."

He ascended the staircase with her and opened the very first door, which led into a comfortable little room. She seated herself without further ceremony on the little sofa, took off her hat and cloak, and declared that in spite of the second breakfast she was hungry again. Edwin had seated himself opposite to her, and had taken up the *carte*. They set themselves jestingly to make their choice, and he could not help reminding her of the little dinners in the Jägerstrasse. He asked after her birds. She said that now she only maintained a dozen sparrows, and that she would rather hear nothing of those pleasures of the table. For even the restaurant had been in the plot, and had only charged her the half, as she had discovered afterwards. Besides, she would soon be reduced to Lotte's bread-and-butter. "But to-day we won't speak of it," said she, breaking off; "it will all come soon enough."

She stood up, yawned once, and began to examine the lithographs which hung on the walls.

"You see," said she, "if we had brought Jean we should have been better served."

"The waiter seems to think that we shall be satisfied with our young love. Wait a moment; I will go down myself, and make friends with the cook, and bribe some obliging spirit to devote itself exclusively to us."

He left the little room and hastened down-stairs. Half-way down as he went round the corner he ran against a gentleman who was rushing as quickly up-stairs. The mutual apologies died on their lips.

"You here, Edwin?"

"Marquard!"

"No worse fellow!" laughed the doctor, "and in the best society; but you—is Balder here?"

"Unfortunately it was impossible—you know him."

"Then you are alone? Well, anyhow you must be of our party. All good friends, down to my little suburban nightingale, with whom I am not ashamed to show myself. Only imagine such a thing—the dear innocent child would not compromise herself by going on an excursion alone with me. She insisted on her friend Christiane's accompanying us, or she said she would also remain at home. Now this most excellent artist is odious to me, if only because she will train youthful prodigies into lovers of virtue and of Sebastian Bach. But what could I do? The little one keeps me in order; she imagines that we should look very well as man and wife if we were legally married, and for the present I let her think so. So I went to invite Fräulein Christiane, and was thinking whom I should ask as fourth in case of her accepting—a *partie de plaisir* composed of three is well known to be nonsense. For a moment I thought of you. Would you have come? However, on going into her room I found Heinrich the discontented sitting at her piano, demonstrating to her his musical rubbish. Listen: I believe something is going on in that quarter, though the lady is so very ugly. What could I do but offer him the fourth place in the carriage? I hoped he would say no, as every one knows he can't bear me. But *quod non*! he accepted eagerly, and till now everything has gone quite charmingly. Even before the champagne we were in high spirits, and no one could describe the fireworks of wit which have since been let off. You come just at the right moment, and it will in any case be better that we do not all drive home in the same carriage."

"You are very kind," replied Edwin, as he laughingly disengaged himself from his friend, who wanted

to drag him off at once; "but I have also brought company with me, and it is doubtful whether——"

"Who? not really——? Oh, you most unfathomable of all philosophers. 'Yesterday mounted on your high steed, to-day from a wound in your heart you bleed'—the princess?"

Edwin nodded.

"And only yesterday I had to give you the address, and allow myself to be deluded, and now in the name of heaven! Very well, we will not be in the way. Fig-trees and palms shall be left to themselves."

"You are totally mistaken," said Edwin, with a half-sigh. "As regards temperature these tropical plants and I may be well assorted; but palms are also a sign of victory. In spite of our apparent intimacy, her Highness is just as icy as ever; I really think that if she is not to end by going quite to sleep it will be the best to bring her to your party, if she feels inclined, which I hardly doubt."

"Bravo! I will prepare the ladies. A relation of yours? A cousin from the country?"

"For my sake. In the Rosenstrasse I pass for her cousin."

"All right. I will answer for *our* cousins. They will be rather jealous, which will increase the value of our homage; at all events we are highly respectable. Very well then, in five minutes. The last room at the end of the passage. And the *menu* is my affair."

He left Edwin before the door of the little room, and returned to his friends, humming as he went and tidying his thin hair with a small pocket-brush.

"I hope," said he, as he entered the room where Mohr was sitting with the two ladies before a table on which a clean cloth was laid, "that you will pardon my having acted on my own responsibility. A friend of mine, together with a very pretty and virtuous cousin of his, happens to be here under this very same roof. I have begged him to join us; he is

already known to two of you, for he is none other than our friend, Edwin the philosopher."

"Another admirer of our artist!" cried Mohr. "It is I who ought to protest. I had subscribed for all the musical enthusiasm which was to be displayed to-day, since Marquard only honours the woman in the artist. But let it be; this Edwin is an old crony of mine, and is besides deep in debt to Fräulein Christiane for her daily free concerts."

"Is he not a tall man with colourless hair, not exactly handsome, but interesting-looking when he is without his old straw hat?" asked the little singer with a cheerful musical voice, whose compass of two octaves one would hardly have suspected from its speaking tones. At the first glance she appeared strikingly pretty, but on looking at her more closely it became apparent that the features of the round face were not entirely in harmony; the large eyes, and the little snub nose, the sentimental mouth, and the chin, which showed a great love of life, were in strange contrast with one another, just as her attire was freely composed of all sorts of ill-assorted fragments. She wore a black, somewhat shabby, velvet gown, which might have formerly belonged to a much more stately prima donna; over that a singular scarf of tulle and lace, a brooch with the photograph of a little terrier, ear-rings of bad Roman mosaic, and a hoop of gold in her hair, which was cut short and curly.

Her movements were sometimes extravagantly lively, at others tired and sentimental. Only when she laughed—when by-the-by it was her habit to open her mouth rather too wide—one saw clearly what her intimate acquaintances meant by calling her a "good creature," with whom one really could not take anything amiss. By the side of this queer wild girl, Christiane's dark face and black hair looked more than ever gloomy, though one could not help being struck by a certain

characteristic grandeur which there was about her, while the extreme simplicity of her dress was in advantageous contrast with the comedian-like toilette of the singer.

She had sat on in complete silence after Marquard's return. At Edwin's name she had started, but did not say a word, only nodding when Mohr asked her whether he should place a chair for the new guest by her side. She mechanically smoothed down the folds of her dark red woollen gown, and passed her hand over her eyes. Adele had told her that her expression was sometimes cross and malevolent if she did not smooth her thick eyebrows. As a rule this was a matter of indifference to her, but to-day she did not wish to appear more repelling than she really felt.

They listened to the sounds outside. At last the door was opened and Mohr sprang to meet the newcomers. When Toinette entered the singer rose and went towards her, more to show her own pretty figure than from any particular friendliness. She saw at the first glance that the new face completely cut her out, and could only console herself with her toilette, which she considered highly *comme il faut*, while that of "the cousin" was thoroughly countrified. Christiane greeted Edwin's relation with a silent bend of the head. She had grown very pale as soon as her eyes fell on the charming girl. Her heart was suddenly oppressed with a grievous load which seemed to choke her, so that her greeting stuck in her throat; if it had been possible she would have got up and turned her back on her unsuspecting companions. There was, however, nothing for it but to stand fast. When Edwin, after addressing a few friendly words to her, seated himself without further ceremony on the chair by her side, the blood returned to her cheeks, and she could say in an indifferent tone, that she was glad to have the pleasure, etc. He alluded to the night when he had found her absorbed in Schopenhauer's 'Parerga,'

and excused himself, on the score of his work, for never having resumed that moonlight conversation by daylight. It was only one of "the sorrows of the world" that one could often make the least use of the good things which were the nearest to one. Meantime the soup was brought in, and Marquard began his business as host. His meeting with Edwin and the beautiful stranger had put him into the best of humours, and he treated Toinette with a humorous formality, the reason for which was quite unknown to the others. Not a word betrayed that he had already made her acquaintance. He questioned her as to her provincial life and circumstances, and asked how she liked Berlin and its inhabitants. The little comedy amused her also, and she entered into it most gaily. Her delicate tact made her show her most charming side to Adele and Christiane, so that after the very first glass of champagne, the little singer, "good creature" as she was, had clinked glasses with her, had declared she was quite in love with her, that she must go and see her in Berlin, and that on the other hand she (Toinette) must go to the theatre every evening that Adele was to appear on the stage.

Even Christiane could not withstand the charm of her new acquaintance, but it did not make her any the happier. She had never felt herself to be so destitute of all grace as now by the side of this irresistible loveliness, which seemed at last even to please Mohr, her own admirer, whom the arrival of Edwin's suddenly-discovered relative had at first considerably bored. He grew more and more talkative, and uttered a number of quaint ideas in his own style, and as he saw that his grave neighbour only shook her head absently at his strange paradoxes, he addressed himself at last exclusively to Toinette. When Marquard had seen that the champagne was properly iced, and had fulfilled all his duties as host towards his guests, he gave himself up comfortably, and without troubling

himself to be witty, to a half-audible conversation with his little flame, only laughing every now and then in a superior way at Mohr's jokes, as at the unaccountable folly of a man who is exerting himself quite unnecessarily.

Mohr had let him laugh for a while, only shooting a sarcasm at him from time to time. But as he drank freely, and moreover heated himself with his own discourse, he could at last no longer contain his feelings with regard to the easy, self-satisfied man of the world, whom, as we know, he considered to be superficial and cold-hearted.

"My honoured friends," said he, rising and holding up his full glass, "allow me five minutes in order to discuss an affair which is of universal interest. Here we are sitting most comfortably together; some of us love one another, or wish that we did, or do not wish it. In any case this modest little orgie is very likely to excite the jealousy of the so-called gods, who see six individuals sitting here in tolerable comfort, washing away with a fairly pure champagne all anxieties about the present and future life, and thereby losing all fear and love of gods and devils. Well, as regards the jealousy felt by the former, I am far from thinking it a reproach to them. On the contrary, as I have not exactly any reason for admiring them, for they have scarcely acted kindly by my humble self, it is this jealousy alone which somewhat reconciles me to them. These poor devils of gods, who cannot always do as they would, show themselves in this one thing akin to humanity; for, my friends, deep thought and ripe experience have taught me that envy or jealousy is a sign of the truest humanity—of genius—of what may be called divinity in our nature, just as in the gods it is their truly human side. You look at me with astonishment, Fräulein Adele, and seem to be asking your neighbour whether I am in the habit of putting forth such crazy views, or only when I have drunk sweet

wine. But you are mistaken ; I am as sober as your neighbour, sweet nightingale. For tell me yourself, would you be as charming as you are, the spoilt child of the stage, the bephotographed, calumniated, adored Adele, if you were not filled with envy of the happy being called Adelina—the divine Patti ? Without this envy, which from the very beginning has borne you higher and higher, you would still be warbling indifferent couplets, as on your first *début*. Without envy of the great champions of thought, our friend Edwin would now be a well-paid professor of logic, and would be lecturing all the year round at some stupid university or other. Without this envy our artist, Fräulein Christiane, would never have poured her whole soul into the tips of her fingers, nor should I, her unworthy neighbour at dinner, have produced out of my unsatisfactory nature one of the most remarkable compositions of modern times—the ‘Sinfonia Ironica.’ Even Fräulein Toinette, with whom I have not yet the honour of being intimately acquainted, has received—I read it in her black eyes—her portion of this hereditary virtue. For what is envy but what is usually called religion : *i. e.* the confession of our insufficiency and poverty, and of our yearning for perfection, our longing to reach a higher grade, to which higher spirits have already attained ? Must it not put us, therefore, in a better humour with the so-called gods, that they are equally dissatisfied with themselves ; that they are always filled with unrealized and eternally unrealizable longings after the joys of poor mortals, which are denied to them ?—perhaps a dinner in the Turkish tent with agreeable company, bubbling over with good-humour and *crémant rose*. That they should then go so far as to wish maliciously to destroy these joys is a degradation of the virtue of envy of which I do not approve, but from which no virtue is safe. On the other hand, nothing is more offensive to gods and men than certain people with whom one meets sometimes, who

have never felt the delight of noble envy ; who in their superior self-satisfaction look on with contemptuous smiles at those who are less self-satisfied ; who when they have just shaved themselves tap their cheeks with infinite pleasure and cry : ‘ You are indeed a capital fellow ! ’ My friends, I know what I owe to this company. I refrain from all personalities, but when I see certain faces, one in particular which is beginning to lose its hair, which has the face to——”

He spoke with increasing volubility and loudness, fixing his eyes more and more defiantly on Marquard, who on his side received this singular apostrophe with the most cheerful mien in the world. But at these last words, the smile disappeared suddenly from his lips. He refilled his glass, and struck an empty one which stood by him with a knife.

“ Ladies and gentlemen,” said he, “ as we have no president to call any one to order who may possibly abuse his freedom of speech, each one must stand up for himself. I am venturing to interrupt the honourable speaker, because he is on the point of doing something for which I should certainly not envy him : of interrupting the beautiful harmony, in six parts, which reigns in this company, by making the very opposite of a declaration of love to one of its members, who is perhaps very unworthy, but certainly not forward. I have the honour of being intimately acquainted with this member, and I know that our friend, Heinrich Mohr, has always made use of his freedom of judgment to pronounce him unamiable. I have never disputed his right to think as he choose, though I was formerly of a very different opinion, and on the contrary considered this unenvious man to be very amiable. For some time, however (and he threw a comically-pathetic glance at his neighbour), I have begun to doubt about this confident opinion of mine, but for very different reasons. I will not allude to the witty controversy on the virtue of envy. But

at all events, my friend Mohr will allow that there are exceptions to the rule. I, my friends, have studied so much natural history that I know the ostrich would gain no perfection by envying the falcon of his plumes, and the sparrow would be a curious enthusiast were he to practise his scales in order to sing like the nightingale. If, therefore, I in early life gave up cultivating talents which I did not possess, and made an effort as a true realist to take the world as I found it, should not it rather be reckoned a virtue?—especially as I have brought to considerable perfection the art of admiring and enjoying what has been denied to me. Besides, I possess other valuable qualities; such as a talent for composing a *menu*, for brewing a bowl of punch, and prescribing for an intermittent fever. Now, after this trifling but necessary amendment, I propose that we drink to the health of the ladies, and persuade Fräulein Adele to sing away the last remains of discord with her beautiful voice.”

A loud clapping of hands, to which Adele gave the signal, rewarded this speech, during which Mohr had slowly resumed his seat, and emptied his glass in little sips. Now he refilled it, and turned to Marquard with a curious twinkle in his clever grey eyes.

“I heartily agree with you in this proposal,” said he—“only I must add a short personal observation, namely, that I was an insolent ass. The ladies will excuse the coarseness of the observation, in the truth of which I have no doubt they will agree. Fritz Marquard, I hereby declare that you are right in tapping your cheeks, and feeling yourself to be a capital fellow. From this day forth I beg for your friendship, and hope to prove mine to you.”

“And if a man is fallen,
Love shows him what is right”—

sang Adele, springing from her seat and running to an old piano which stood in a corner of the room

for the use of visitors, who might wish to dance. She opened it quickly, struck a few chords, and called Christiane in order that they might try it more thoroughly. Meantime Marquard had gone up to Mohr and had shaken him by the hand in the most friendly manner; Edwin and Toinette had risen with the others; lights were brought in and a fresh bottle, and in the midst of the noise caused by this coming and going, Christiane swept her hands over the piano in vehement runs which ended in Weber's '*Invitation à la Valse*.' Then the room became stiller. Edwin had carried two chairs into the embrasure of a window which was lighted up by the last red beams of the autumnal sun. Without a word from him Toinette seated herself on one of the chairs, and he by her side. At table he had scarcely spoken to her, but while conversing with the others had listened only for her voice, and so little as he appeared to be looking at her, had always kept the delicate profile and black lashes in view. Now as she looked out at the bare trees of the inn garden, bathed in red, with the evening glow streaming also on to her head and shoulders, with her lips half-open as if to drink in the last rays of light, he no longer put a constraint on himself, but looked straight in her face.

The room was half-dark; the two candles only illuminated the table with the empty bottles and half-full glasses, and Marquard's pleasant face. He was smoking his cigar, and was the only one who had remained in his place, while he attentively gazed at the piano through the round glasses of his gold spectacles; Mohr had thrown himself into a chair near the performer; Adele tripped up and down the room singing softly with the piano, every now and then coquettishly throwing a grape from the bunch which, bacchante-like, she had fastened to the golden hoop in her hair, at her sulky yet tender admirer, who continued phlegmatically to smoke.

"You have been very amiable to-day," whispered Edwin to Toinette. "I thank you for the conquest you have made of my friends; I am vain enough to think that it was half for my sake. If only Balder had seen you so!"

"Why?"

"Because I always think of him when I am happy; because I wish him to share in everything which is good. Did you never feel anything like that with your sisters?"

"I often wished I could, but it could not be. They each thought only of herself, of her few miserable ornaments, of her suitors, of the next ball at the Casino. I really seriously believe that sisters are not capable of feeling for one another what you call brotherly love. But hush!—she is beginning to sing. Who would have looked for so much music in the funny little doll!"

Indeed it was a stream of delicious music which poured through the rooms as Adele sang Pergolese's 'Morning Serenade.'

"Tre giorni son che Nina
Al lette se ne sta."

Christiane accompanied her. The worn-out instrument seemed quite metamorphosed under her hands, and gave forth tones, such as had probably seldom been heard in its best years. When the charming little song was finished, Marquard rose and solemnly kissed the hand of the singer. "Bravo! bravissima!—you are the singing spring in the story of the 'Lark'," said he.

"An in-cantatrice," cried Mohr out of his dark corner after having made a dreadful noise by applauding all by himself.

"Do not waste your enthusiasm, gentlemen," laughed the mischievous girl, twirling round on her heel. "There is better to come! And the lion's share of

the applause is certainly due to my strict mistress. Now '*Voi che sapete.*' And without waiting for the accompaniment she began the touching air which she had just been studying with Christiane.

The latter, who was now sitting in total darkness, but who shook her head at Mohr's question whether she wished for lights, accompanied the song with single chords. Her thoughts were far from Pergolese, Mozart, and all her other musical saints. Over the piano hung an oval mirror, exactly opposite to the window in which Toinette and Edwin were sitting. She could see clearly in the light of the evening sun, which had faded very slowly, the expression of Edwin's eyes, as he gazed at the calm averted face of the girl. During dinner, her first jealous pain at meeting him in this dangerous society had almost disappeared, as he did not seem to trouble himself much about his charming cousin. Now it became suddenly clear to her that this indifference had only been a mask, and an unspeakably bitter feeling overcame her when she thought of the civil friendliness with which he had treated her, and of the happiness she had felt. Now in the rosy twilight opposite to the stranger, how different was the language of his eyes! With the clear light of despised passion she understood it all: he loves this girl! And she could not even hate him for it. Did not the stranger possess all the seductions which were wanting in her? Moreover, sharp-sighted jealousy told her that he met with no return of his feelings, neither such as he deserved, nor still less such as *she* could have repaid him with. While Edwin's eyes were fixed on her profile, as those of a worshipper might be on a wonder-working image, this cold enchantress was able to go on gazing immovably at the dry branches outside; her hand did not meet his, which as if seeking for something he had extended before his knee. Where was her heart?—if indeed she had one. And he—why did not his pride rebel against

serving without wages—he who ought to have ruled? Yes indeed, ruled; but over whom? Over a heart which no one had as yet taken the trouble to conquer. He least of all. Had he not lived for years under the same roof with her, without feeling the slightest wish to approach nearer to *her*, who daily conversed with him on her piano, sending up her most secret thoughts in intelligible tones?

This it was which now filled her thoughts; and, added to the other excitements of the moment, to the unusual dissipation, to her having taken wine to which she was unaccustomed, actually intoxicated her senses. Her mood grew almost uncontrollably wild. When Mozart's song was finished she said shortly: "You are not in good voice, child; it is the champagne. You must not sing another note, or to-morrow you will be as hoarse as possible," and without attending to Marquard's remonstrances, she began to improvise with stormy loudness. A string gave way with a jarring sound—she did not care; a second and a third—she played on without a pause. Mohr, who had pushed his chair close up behind hers, while Marquard was sitting in the dark by Adele on a little sofa, fell into a feverish ecstasy. He had never heard such playing; he was musician enough to know that the greatest masters would have been enchanted if they could have heard her improvise in such a frame of mind. More than once he turned towards the two couples, and tried by throwing his long arms enthusiastically about to draw their attention to the real genius which was now pouring itself forth. But he seemed to be alone in his admiration. To Marquard, at least, this wonderful playing was not much more than the roar of a storm, as he was talking the whole time incessantly into the ear of the little singer, and Edwin—thinking himself quite unobserved, the light having completely faded from the sky—had laid hold of a lock of Toinette's hair, which he held tightly in his hand.

Now he bent cautiously forward, and while pretending to fasten back the curtain, he pressed the soft lock suddenly to his lips. At the same moment a fourth string of the piano snapped. A painful dissonance sounded shrill in the midst of the powerful passages, and the performer got up suddenly, pushed back her chair, and exclaimed faintly: "No more! It is killing me. Air! Air!"

"For God's sake, Fräulein!" cried Mohr, who had sprung up with her: "you are giddy, you are fainting; here, lean against—— Shall I fetch you some water? Shall I take you out into the open air?"

"It is nothing! It is over! Leave me. Why do you take hold of me like that? I am quite well; perfectly well—all the better for being left alone. The wine, the music, the darkness; give me my hat and cloak, I will go into the air for a bit, then I shall be all right!"

He busied himself in great consternation to do what she had asked of him in such a low tone that the others scarcely noticed what was going on behind the piano. Marquard alone looked up for a moment. "Is this also the champagne?" he cried jestingly; "you should drink a cup of coffee to calm yourself; or is genius giddy at its own wings, which are bearing it to heaven?"

No answer. Mohr accompanied her to the door, while she was fastening her cloak. "Remain here," she whispered authoritatively.

"But you will return?"

"When I am all right again."

With this she withdrew from him, and he returned full of excited thoughts to the piano.

It did him good to sit on her chair, and to be able to touch the same keys over which her hands had just been thundering.

But he did not play. Only now and then he sounded a half-audible chord, as if to caress the string

which she had so shaken. But all the time he was listening intently. There was nothing moving; after a while he knew that she would not return.

Suddenly he sprang up. "My friends," said he, "Fräulein Christiane has taken French leave. But as it is pitch dark, and she did not seem to be quite well, I feel it to be my duty to follow her, and in case of necessity to offer her my services; she may not be able to find a carriage. You, Marquard, will of course look after everything here; and to-morrow you can tell me what I owe you, of course including Fräulein Christiane's share. Good night!" Before any one could answer he had put on his grey felt hat and had disappeared likewise.

Half-an-hour later two droschkes drove away from the Turkish tent. In the first one sat Marquard with Adele, in the second Edwin with Toinette.

The first, which had its windows closely shut to keep out the evening air, and was seemingly in no hurry, soon turned out of the high-road into the darker drives of the Thiergarten as if not caring to be followed by the second one.

In the second, Toinette had her window open though the air was cold and damp. But the beautiful girl declared that she liked it, that the music had gone to her head; in truth her cheeks were burning. As they drove along, at first chatting about the people with whom they had been spending their time, they grew more and more monosyllabic, and at last became altogether silent; meantime the moon, which was in its first quarter, rose above the tops of the trees, and in the great clearness of the autumnal air soon poured its silver light over the trees by the wayside, and on the stones on the road. It was lovely to peer into the deeper parts of the park, where played mysterious lights and shadows,—now a statue showing itself in dazzling whiteness, now the power of the light being confounded by a deep black thicket. Edwin had

been gazing for some time through his window, busied with all kinds of thoughts which were neither cheerful nor sad. Once he thought he recognized a woman's form moving swiftly on, which when he bent forward seemed also to notice him and drew back quickly into the deeper shadow. He turned to Toinette to tell her of his supposition that Christiane had preferred returning all the way on foot, when he discovered that his companion had fallen asleep.

The moonbeams played over her little hands which were lying gloveless in her lap. Through the dusk which surrounded her head he saw her smile and her teeth glisten. For a time he controlled himself by an effort; his heart seemed to be beating up into his temples; at last the smile on her lips was stronger than his firmest resolutions. He cautiously approached his face to hers, and after a pause of five minutes, during which he let her breath pass close over his eyes, he pressed a gentle kiss on to her half-open lips.

At the same moment she awoke, so suddenly that he drew back terrified and grew hot all over. "Where are we?" she asked in a whisper. "What a beautiful moon! I believe I have been asleep. That is very rude, is it not? But one gets tired with pleasure. It is a very long time since I enjoyed myself so much as to-day."

In this manner she chatted on without embarrassment. He could not guess whether she had felt the kiss, or whether she had thought it part of a dream. He had certainly felt no response.

A short hour more and he helped her from the carriage at her own door in the Rosenstrasse. She thanked him over and over again heartily for the delightful day. "To-morrow we will go on with the cure," she cried to him as she was shutting the house-door after her. With this she dismissed him, while he, filled with blissful dreams, went home through the dark streets.

CHAPTER V.

Beloved sun !
 Thou all embracing !
 Thou on thy bosom
 Foldest thy child !

Sleeping I lay
 In a fever-dream ;
 Thou camest hither
 With healing-balm.

Streamest divinely,
 With smile most beaming,
 Through the wretched
 And lonely cell,

Lifting the veil
 From the fetter'd mind
 Of the sick one, as sheaths
 Of buds are broken.

Over high towers
 And long slant roofs,
 Through thickest foliage,
 Makest thy way,

And swimmest caressing,
 Thou the great swayer !
 Around my knees,
 And on my heart.

At earth's banquets
 I have scarce rejoic'd ;

All my delight was
 Ripen'd by thee.

The rosy fruits here
 Whose juices cool,
 And here the white bread
 Whose strength grows mine ;

Ah ! and the dear
 Sole sweetest maid,
 Of the smooth fair hair,
 The glowing cheeks—

She blooms at thy bidding,
 For thine own sun-child,
 To be *my* blessing,
 To be *my* joy.

Stay, oh, stay by me
 Till she comes nigh ;
 Breathe on her frame
 Thy golden beams.

Oh ! were she ever
 From me withdrawn,
 Then were it better
 Thou too wert hidden.

That only thine eye
 On my mound of earth,
 Some still fair noon,
 Might stroke my slumbers.

THE sheet of paper on which these verses were scribbled in pencil lay on Balder's knee. Soon after Edwin had left him he had seated himself at the

window in the sun, and had begun to enjoy a holiday in his own fashion, taking a sheet of paper, and confiding to it the feelings which were at the moment uppermost. We know that he was never happier than when his heart began to sing, and when his hand could hardly write down quickly enough the melody which he heard by listening to his own thoughts.

But to-day he was particularly happy. His unusual faculty for finding joy in everything, however ordinary, seemed to increase with the feeling of returning strength. For a long time he gazed through the closed window at the white cat, who, blinking luxuriously, lay outside the window-sill, sunning herself and pretending not to see the sparrows who ventured quite close up to her. A white cloud passed slowly across the blue sky. He grew absorbed in gazing at it, as if he saw the most wonderful pictures, till his eyes grew quite dazzled. Then he stood up and walked slowly across the room, dragging his disabled foot after him almost as if he were about to dance, now and then pressing to his lips the last of the little oranges which Marquard had lately brought him, in order to enjoy both its fragrance and its juice. He thought now of his brother, and how quickly his time must be passing; now of Reginchen, whose voice sounded clear out of the front house, where she was busy in the kitchen singing as she worked by the open window; now and then he remained standing before Edwin's book-shelves, pulled out one of the books at random (he knew them all), read half a page, and put it back in order to enjoy all the thoughts which it had called up. He also took up his tools as if to work, but then he recollected that he had promised Edwin to take at least a week's holiday. He himself felt it to be quite unnecessary. He had never felt stronger or better or breathed more freely. Reginchen, when she brought him his

dinner at noon, noticed his unusual cheerfulness and freshness.

"Your illness has done you good, Herr Walter," she said.

"No," he returned smiling, "it is your care, Reginchen."

"Well, it comes to the same thing," she said; "but why did you not go into the country with the Herr doctor?" (She always called Edwin by his full title.) "Nobody is at home to-day who is capable of moving."

"Then are you going into the country too, Reginchen?"

"I? Oh no; to-day I am the house-dog. My parents are gone to a christening, they were off by eleven; the workmen are of course all away, so nobody is at home except the old people; *she* is really unwell, and *he* is always unwell to keep her company, and the other way round too. I am sure you think I am in fun; but only ask their maid. If he only has a cold in his head she is in such a fuss that she can neither eat nor drink, and so must go to bed too. It is funny, is it not?—and yet nice to see two old people still loving each other so much."

"Still? Why I thought that the longer one knew one another the greater must be one's love."

"Certainly! '*Je länger je lieber.*' But one does not always meet with it. Would you like to be old, Herr Walter?"

"Certainly, if those I love grew old with me."

"No," said she, "I should not. I used to think that nothing could be worse than dying. But now—you will laugh at me—my life is quite spoilt, though I have really nothing to complain of. It all seems so narrow, and I feel afraid. Nothing gives me pleasure. I don't know what I wish for, or what I am afraid of. You are so clever, Herr Walter. What is the reason of all this?"

"Dear Reginchen!" And he took hold of her

hand, and looked into her honest face, which was turned towards him with innocent curiosity. He was seeking for words in which he could show her that it was her superabundant youth, her yearning wonder as to what might be before her, which was spoiling her daily life; perhaps he was making up his mind to confess that he was feeling just the same.

Suddenly she withdrew her hand. "Didn't you hear? The old lady opposite is ringing for me. I don't know what she can want. But her maid-servant is gone out; it is her Sunday, so there is nobody but me to answer the bell. Now you must eat, Herr Walter; perhaps if I have time later on I will come up again for five minutes. It is too dull for you, especially on a Sunday!"

She ran out of the room, and he was almost glad to have been interrupted. What could he have said to her, without betraying himself altogether? And what would happen if she knew, and were to answer by confessing her own love? Would they not then be engaged, and would he not then be obliged to confess to Edwin? And yet it appeared to him impossible to let any human being into the secret which seemed to himself almost fabulous and presumptuous. Was it even credible? His extreme youth, his ill health, his dislike to life in the world—and he, as any other might do, was to stand forth and say: "Here is a maiden whose husband I will be; I will have my own hearth and home, and will have children to bring up!" As he thought this he grew quite red, though he was alone, and he shook his head. But then he seated himself at the table and began to eat, and having a good appetite quite enjoyed the simple fare, so that he became more and more hopeful and happy, and silently made up his mind that if she did come in the afternoon he would really tell her what he believed to be the cause of her hopes and her fears: that she longed to give up her heart to another, to lose her

own life in order to rise to a joyful resurrection in that of another.

But he had long finished his dinner, and the cat had polished his plate so clean that it shone in the sun, and still he was waiting for his little housekeeper. For the first time he felt impatient and bored, and could settle to nothing. He heard four o'clock strike, and then five; the sun grew less brilliant, and he suddenly felt a violent longing to get out into the open air, out of the dull loneliness of his "tub." How long it was since he had had the sky over him, or at all events only as much as he could get by stretching his head out of the window! A feeling of joyful courage thrilled through him, as he drew the old black cloak and the cap from the cupboard and, so protected, glided softly down the stairs. He might have been setting off on a long dangerous journey, so strangely did his heart beat. And yet he had no intention of leaving the house; he only meant to seat himself in a corner of the yard and to wait the return of the girl, who on her way up to him would be surprised to find him down there.

Though the twilight was falling, the air in the courtyard was very mild, as though the warmth of the sun which during the day had filtered down between the four walls had not all departed from these depths. Not a breath was moving, not a sound was to be heard either in the house or in the street. Balder felt almost like a boy, playing at hide-and-seek, as he seated himself in the yellow bare arbour and remarked that any one coming from the front house would not see him at once, as the stakes were so closely crossed in front of him—to say nothing of the black pump. All the same he wrapped himself carefully in his cloak, and pulled up his collar so that his light hair should not betray him.

So there he sat, waiting for Reginchen and dreaming wonderful dreams. What would Edwin say on his return when he found that Balder had had an

excursion of his own ! But the best of it all he must keep to himself, or should he confess everything to-day ? If he had really been as happy as he hoped to be, and had spoken heart to heart with her, would he be capable of hiding his happiness ? Would it not shine forth from his eyes, glow on his cheeks, and spring involuntarily from his lips ?

He made up his mind not to trouble himself beforehand, but to follow his own heart. If she were to come now ! She could not have forgotten her promise ; but what could be keeping her so long ? He felt a longing disquiet, and yet could not venture to seek her in the front house. How could he know whether he should find her alone ?

And yet she was alone, when he had been sitting half-an-hour in the arbour. She had had a great deal to do for the old people up-stairs, till at last having brought them their tea-things she had been dismissed. Not till then did she remember her promise, and at the same moment it occurred to her that she had never looked at the Schiller which she ought soon to return. Besides, if he asked about it, it would look so bad to know nothing whatever about it. What would he think of her if she showed herself so careless about education !

So she seated herself in the dark shop, where, however, sufficient light penetrated through the half-open door, placed her book on her lap, and took her knitting into her hand, for she looked upon it as waste of time to read without working. But still she did not open the little book ; her thoughts had wandered far away from it to him of whom she had heard nothing for so many weeks, not even through her brother. She would gladly send him the stockings, which had been finished a long time, and then if he were in earnest—— “After all, he cannot love me with all his heart,” she sighed to herself. “But if he knew how often I think of him—he is so good ?”

She saw his sturdy figure, the dark honest face with the black bushy beard so distinctly before her, that as she silently assured him of her love, she could not help laughing aloud. She had, however, the greatest veneration for him, partly because of his being a printer, which she thought must be a wonderfully learned trade, and partly because her brother had told her that he had written a variety of papers, for which there was a great demand among the working men. Her innocent and very humble little self felt not a little flattered that such a clever remarkable man should be as shy as a boy with her, so that he had not even the courage to tell her that he loved her; indeed she felt curiously touched when she thought how much he must love her if he sought for no grander, better educated girl. She would repay him by loving him truly and tenderly, and would learn a great deal more, and she thought that above all she owed it to him to read Schiller, though she could not rightly understand the fine words in it. If only *he* were sitting by her and reading it to her, it would be much easier. She liked so much to hear his voice, and her brother had often enough boasted to her of his being a wonderful speaker. But as he would not come, there was nothing for it but to begin and try to read herself. She had just opened the book in her lap and read the first lines of 'Melancholie an Laura,' when suddenly a dark shadow outside came between her and the daylight, so that she sprang up with a frightened little cry, and let the book fall to the ground.

The subject of her secret thoughts stood in the flesh before her, or rather was kneeling at her feet picking up the book, while he stammeringly begged her pardon for having frightened her by his sudden entrance.

However, her nerves were not so delicate but that she recovered herself at once, so soon as she had convinced herself that it was no ghost, but the real

dark-browed individual for whose presence she had been longing so ardently. On the contrary, she laughed at her alarm, and then became as red as she had been pale, and could not comprehend why he stared so fixedly at the sheet of paper which had fallen out of the book, and which he had now unfolded and read. She did not think it quite civil that he should forget her for a scribble like that; but then, thought she, it was all because of his learning. He apologized as he laid the book on the counter, and asked shyly how she had come by it. Herr Walter had lent it to her; she had just been meaning to read in it. He must have left the paper in it by mistake. What could be written on it that Herr Franzelius studied it so diligently?

"Fräulein Reginchen," replied the printer, wiping the sweat from his brow, "allow me in the mean time to put the paper in my pocket. I will return it to him later on—it might fall into wrong hands; but are you sure that you have forgiven me for coming in so suddenly? If you only knew!" Saying this he looked anxiously on each side. She had never seen him in such a state of agitation.

"What is the matter with you?" she asked. "Will you have a glass of water? Or if I could help you in any way——"

"You *can*, Reginchen; you are the only person who can help me. But *here*—so close to the street—we may be interrupted any moment. Oh, you do not know what it is all about!" She thought she knew very well. What could it be if she were the only person who could help him?—and what could he have to confide to her in which he did not wish to be interrupted, except the one thing—the one thing of importance to which he had not hitherto been able to make up his mind, but which she had long read in his eyes!

"You are quite right," she answered in the most

innocent tone as if she were rather curious. "It is like being in the street here. Do you know what! The workshop is quite empty, neither is there anybody in the yard; there you will be able to tell me everything. I must only shut up the shop here. But it is a surprise! I little thought of seeing you here to-day!"

She quickly shut the heavy door of the shop, so that they suddenly found themselves standing in darkness. But the next moment she had opened the second door on to the passage, and shown him out. "None of my people are at home," she whispered; "my parents will not be back till seven from the christening; the Herr doctor is making an expedition into the country; there is only Herr Walter." Now her promise recurred to her again, but it was now too late. She resolved to explain in the evening.

"If it really is a secret and you do not wish to be seen in the house, run quickly across the yard. The old lady up-stairs might just come to the window. Good gracious! What is the matter with you? You are quite pale, and do not speak a word!"

He did not answer but followed her advice. Without looking either to the right or to the left, they both rushed across the little yard, which was now in deep shadow, and entered the workshop, whose windows were just above the arbour. They were all shut. "We will open one," whispered the active girl; "you are not accustomed to the smell of leather and pitch; besides, there is no danger, as I told you, there is not a cat in the yard to overhear us. Now! Have you got your breath again? I feel quite creepy to think what your secret can be."

She had seated herself so that he should not see her face distinctly, with her back against the open window on a three-legged stool, and with both her hands she smoothed down her hair which fell from her forehead in loose locks. "It is very hot here," said she as he

did not begin, but with his hands behind his back stumbled up and down the dark room brooding deeply.

At last he stood still before a table on which tools and half-finished work were lying. "Reginchen," said he, "this is perhaps the last time that we shall see one another. If I am not deceived I shall either be a prisoner to-morrow or on my way to America."

"Good heavens!" she cried with unaffected sorrow; "you are not in earnest!"

"Only too much so," he answered in a hollow tone. "Indeed it did not surprise me. I had long seen it coming, Reginchen: look at me once and tell me, do you think I am capable of a crime?"

"You!—you are the best man in the world! You could not harm a child."

"Thank you, Reginchen. It is a great comfort to hear you say that; perhaps it will be the only one that I shall take with me, if I must fly. No; I shall also have the consciousness that it has been in a holy cause."

"But only tell me——"

"You are right; the minutes are precious. I am here in order to ask you to do a great service both to me and to the great cause. Your brother—the best fellow that I ever knew—he is worthy, Reginchen, of having you for a sister; if you want to know more, ask him. He has all the numbers of my newspapers, for which I am being prosecuted. It is true I have irritated them. We have long enough practised a lamb-like patience; the lion begins to find his ass's skin too tight; but it was perhaps unwise of him to betray himself by his roaring before he was ready to spring. It is done; it is only cowards and knaves that are always wise. What they now mean to do, I have no idea, but that it will go against me——"

"Good God!" she cried; "will they try you? Shall you be thrown into prison?"

"Yes; so that I may do no more harm! There

is nothing new or wonderful in that. Oh dear Reginchen, our so-called constitution is nothing but a lie, and is so old that the peaceful citizen looks upon it as belonging to the order of things. But I am not here to explain these things to you, of which your noble innocent heart has no conception. See; this is my most precious possession," and he drew forth a tolerably thick leather pocket-book, which was both tied and sealed up. "These are papers which, if they were found on me, would ruin not only myself—what would that matter?—but many of the noble-hearted men who have trusted themselves to me. I know of no place where I could hide these letters and papers safely; of no man whom I could ask to keep them, come what might, from being seen by any strange eyes, for all my friends stand in the same danger as I do—of the police breaking into their houses by night and ransacking their most secret drawers. So I thought of you, Reginchen; no one will ever suspect you of having treasonable papers; though your father is a Liberal, he has always shaken his head at all plans of social democracy. Will you do me the great favour of keeping this legacy for me, and please, do not let it out of your hands till I write and tell you to what address it is to be sent?"

She hastily seized the pocket-book with both her hands, and pushed it under the thick woollen shawl which she had thrown over her shoulders and tied in a knot behind. "No living soul shall get to know anything about it," she said; "it shall be as safe as if it was in the bank."

"But has it really gone as far as this, Herr Franzelius? You must go away, and for ever?"

She put her hand quickly to her eyes to prevent his seeing the moisture in them; she did feel very sorry for him, and she felt too that she herself was much to be pitied for having her dreams so suddenly destroyed.

"Reginchen," he stammered, "I thank you for caring—though—you cannot imagine what I am feeling—you never would have known if I could have remained—but—as it can no longer do any harm——"

She opened wide her eyes, which were now quite dry.

"Do any harm?" she said.

"Yes, Reginchen; if I go away, you will soon forget me, even if you were to know that I—that you—well, perhaps you know it already."

"I, Herr Franzelius!" Her Eve's nature was completely reawakened; she would not help him, he should bring it out clearly. Why was he such a good speaker if it were only to stutter like a schoolboy with her?

"Reginchen," he said, drawing a deep breath, and taking the bit into his mouth; "if you have not really remarked—and I believe you, for you are not capable of any deception—I—it is a long time since—at least two years— Do give me your hand, Reginchen. Do you see I have sometimes imagined that I might some day have the happiness of begging you—and your good parents—to give me this hand for life? As long as I have known you, I have loved you with all my heart—more than I can express—and—though I know that I do not usually succeed very well—either in life or with women—yet sometimes it seemed to me—that you——"

He stuck fast and let go of her hand in order to get at his pocket-handkerchief and wipe his forehead. The little fair serpent! Though she felt drawn to him with her whole heart, and would gladly have thrown herself into his arms, she thought it only proper to keep him a little longer in suspense.

"What are you saying, Herr Franzelius?" she ejaculated half-poutingly. "You love me—and now—now is it all over? Because you are going away, must you also leave me behind, like an inconvenient piece of furniture which will not go into the box?"

"Oh, Reginchen!" he cried, looking at her suddenly in such a way that she became red and cast down her eyes, "you are only joking; you know very well what I mean, and that I never can cease loving you more dearly than any one else in the world. But if I now tear myself away, believe me I don't do it only because it would appear to me unconscionable with such an uncertain future, and the fate which may possibly befall me, and you so young, so little accustomed to want——"

"Oh!" she exclaimed, interrupting him, "if that is all, I have always heard that to love one another is the chief thing. Don't you remember in the song of 'Aennchen von Tharau,' which you once copied out for me:

"In spite of storms and threatening weather,
We are resolved to stand together?"

"My dear girl," he cried in a transport, while his dark face was all lighted up with the joyful surprise; "is that true? You have remembered that and applied it to me—to us both? Oh, I had not ventured to hope it! Oh, there is no one like you, Reginchen! And now—how happy could I be—if only it *could* come to pass! Only say it once more, dear, precious child!—is it all true? You really would have gone with me if I had proposed it—and your parents—but no—say no more! It would be of no use, and would only make everything still harder."

He sank on to a stool by the table and buried his face in his large hands.

She looked at him in silence. She could not understand his behaviour. What could stand in his way? Why was it "of no use" that she had confessed her love to him, and shown herself willing to go forth into the wide world with him?

Suddenly he sprang up, and going close up to her said:

"Promise me, dear Reginchen, that you will try to

forget what I have just said to you. I ought to have been silent, but it got the better of me. And now farewell, and may you make some one happy who has deserved it better than I have, though I do love you with all my heart—nobody can ever love you more than I do!”

After pressing her hands to his face he wanted to leave her, and to rush hastily out of the workshop, but now she held him fast.

“Dear Herr Franzelius,” said she, “if you are in earnest and really do love me, why should you break my heart, and say things to me which I do not understand, and expect me to make some one else happy whom I do not even know? Oh, indeed, I do love you too—and if there is nothing in the way but my parents—but you must speak; I don’t understand one word of all you say—you are speaking in riddles.”

He remained standing at the door looking at her in perplexity.

“Is it possible?” said he, “you really have no suspicion whom I mean? You see him every day and yet it has never struck you what an impression you have made upon his heart? And yet *I* remarked it long ago; it has caused me severe pain. Oh, Reginchen, you cannot know what it is to grudge such a girl to such a friend, because one loves her oneself!—and yet I know what I owe him, how deep—perhaps it would cost him his life—if you and I——”

“Good God!” she cried, suddenly—“no, no; that is not possible! You cannot mean Herr Walter?”

“Why not?”

“How can you?—such an invalid too! Do you really think that he will ever be well enough to think of such a thing? Good heavens, how you have startled me! I never could have dreamt of such a thing, Herr Walter!”

“I know what I know, dear Reginchen,” answered the printer sadly. “What will happen when he can

again lead a healthy life, and whether indeed there is any hope of it, who can tell? But I should be a rogue if I were to cause him, who has so much to suffer, even the shadow of a grief from which I could save him. Oh, Reginchen, if only you really knew him—the noblest, the grandest soul that ever was in such a fragile body—you could not help loving him as I do, more than myself, and would rather bear and sacrifice everything than trouble one hour of his life.”

They both looked at the ground. A curious embarrassed pause ensued.

“So you really mean——” began Reginchen, but she did not finish her sentence.

“I am as firmly convinced of his love as I am of my own,” stammered Franzelius. “If I could still have doubted, it would all have been clearly proved to me half an hour ago. I have no right to persuade you into anything to which your heart objects; but I know very well that you will also get to love him now that you know his secret; he is a hundred times better than I. It can only be your heavenly goodness—if not a mistake or an accident——”

“No,” she cried vehemently, nearly weeping. “Now I must speak. There was no particular goodness except your own, and I have seen enough of you to know that you are good enough for me. Whether Herr Walter is better than you—perhaps it is so, but I cannot help it—and all the same I like you better. Did you not see it when you tried on your boots—and about the stockings? Wait: I will get them immediately; they have long been ready. I did make such haste with them because I thought then that you were obliged to be off, though indeed not for ever! Good gracious, that I should be forced to fit you out for your journey!”

“Reginchen,” he cried, “you really did? It is too much! Oh, now only do I see how happy we might have been!”

"Who knows what may yet happen?" said she, comforting herself, and drying her eyes with her apron; "but only wait here five minutes; they are on the other side in my work-drawer. I will be back directly. I am sure they will fit you, and they will keep you very warm."

He was strongly tempted, as she softly pushed him away from the door in order to hurry away, to take her lovingly in his arms and to press his thanks for the gift on her fresh lips. But his renunciation in favour of his friend was so thoroughly in earnest that he could not even trust himself to touch her, just because he felt that she would not have checked him.

When she was outside he seated himself on a bench, like a man who has received a severe blow, and pressed his fists into his eyes. Through all his pain he yet enjoyed the bliss of knowing himself to be loved by her, and each of her words which had assured him of it were still sounding in his ears. Suddenly he was roused from this happy oblivion by a piercing shriek from the yard, close to the door leading into the back house. Recognizing Reginchen's voice he sprang up in deadly terror, tore open the door, and was about to rush along the passage into the yard when he was stopped by a sight of horror. On the threshold of the back house, to which two steps led up, lay wrapped in his dark cloak and in complete unconsciousness, the unhappy being, who from fear of betraying his presence had been obliged to remain and to listen to the whole dialogue. It would be impossible to describe the storm which had shaken him, while he stood there without making a sound, leaning against the wall, and seeing all his beloved illusions scattered to the winds! His inward excitement was so painful, that with his delicate chest, which was indeed scarcely healed, he thought he should suffocate, and the thought that these two happy mortals might issue forth and discover him was like a hot iron in the very centre of

his life. He had just strung himself up to escape out into the street, when Reginchen's intention of fetching her present from the front house nailed him once more to his dark corner. Thinking to take advantage of the few minutes before she could return, she had no sooner disappeared through the doorway than he dragged himself to the door, holding on to the wall, for his knees were giving way, in order to reach the staircase which led to his room. But he had only just got as far as the second step, when his strength failed him, a hot stream of blood rushed over his lips and he fell unconscious on the threshold.

When Reginchen returned with the little parcel, which she had done up with much care, she was frightened at the dark mass which hindered her steps. But when she recognized the fair hair, and saw the dark stain on the stone, she lost all composure and cried out for help with as much pain as if she herself had been hit.

She exchanged neither word nor glance with her friend, who hurried immediately to the spot. In a moment everything became clear to her, and feeling herself to be a criminal deserving death, she avoided the eyes of her accomplice. They carried Balder, who only groaned a little, up-stairs; and having laid him carefully on his bed set to work to restore him to consciousness, though they could not but dread his opening his eyes to see them both at his side. In the midst of their efforts Edwin returned home, and entered the room with unforeboding gaiety. All who have lived long enough to know the cruel irony with which fate loves to hurl mortals from the height of happiness into the depth of woe, will be able to imagine his feelings at the sight which met his eyes.

CHAPTER VI.

AFTER Christiane had seen the two drive by, she had turned away from the high-road and had fled into the thickly-wooded park, where she had wandered hour after hour without any object, only now and then sinking breathless on a bench to rest.

The fog had become so impenetrable, that the crescent of the moon only showed itself as a faint ray of light in the grey sky, and below complete darkness reigned in the intricate paths of the Thiergarten. She met nobody—the night was not fit for solitary walks; but she was not in the least afraid of meeting anybody. What could happen to her? To be attacked by a drunken vagabond, robbed, perhaps even murdered? Well, as to that she would take her chance. She feared no other dangers to which a lonely woman wandering about at night might be exposed. When Adele had once asked her how she could go out so boldly at all hours of the evening she had answered:

“I never veil my face; I cannot need a better protection.”

To-day, indeed, her heart tortured with despised love, more than ever convinced that she was a step-child rejected by mother nature, and condemned to eternal renunciation, she felt a kind of bitter delight

in the thought that neither in love nor in hatred had she anything in common with mankind; that she was a being apart, or rather akin to strange night-animals, who being ugly like herself were wise enough to avoid the day-light. In the wild mood which seemed to gain more and more the mastery over her, she would have been hardly surprised had she encountered at a cross-road some of the spirits of the night, and had they invited her to join them. Anything was better than returning to men, among whom it had always been the best and the most amiable who had made her the most miserable without having an idea of what they were doing! No tears came to her relief; all that was personal fell into the back-ground—her jealousy of the beautiful girl, even her passion for Edwin: only her fate, and in opposition to her the world, which had crushed her warm heart, pain at the thought of her wasted youth, dread of the desolation of a loveless old age—all this stood before her soul in spectrally exaggerated but confused outlines, and every now and then forced from her a sound which frightened her in the midst of the deep silence.

When she reached the stagnant ponds over which thick layers of fog were floating she was involuntarily arrested in her course. She stood for a long time staring into the dread whiteness which did not move, and which seemed to be waiting to see whether any being, worn out and hunted to death, might not seek for rest there. But though her blood was inflamed by her unwonted indulgence in wine, she shuddered at the thought of such an end. She mechanically, almost unconsciously, took a stone from the edge of the road and threw it through the fog into the pond. The hollow sound of its fall brought her to herself. She drew a deep breath, trembled, shook herself, and wrapped herself more closely in her cloak. Then she went on her way towards the town more slowly, but directly, and reached it in half an hour.

Among the wild thoughts which filled her head as she walked, only one point was clear, and to that she returned again and again—she would leave the house ; to-morrow she would seek another lodging, and then she would consider whether it would not be better to turn her back altogether on the town, and seek out some corner of the world where life had least charm, where nature was the barest, and men the least cheerful. Invalids often travel for their health, only in order that they may meet with companions in misfortune, whose society they hope will render their own condition more endurable. Why should not the unhappy fly from the neighbourhood of the happy in order to ease their burden among sharers of a similar fate ?

As she entered the little yard of the house in the Dorotheen Strasse, she was struck by seeing a light in her room. She thought, however, that it must be the maid who also waited on her, and who had a second key, and she went upstairs without any misgiving. She could not make up her mind to look up at Edwin's windows. But she found no key in the lock. "Perhaps she has only just lighted the lamp and has gone away again," she thought, as she hastily unlocked the door. The little ante-chamber was dark ; nothing was moving. She quickly opened the door of her little sitting-room and bed-room, but remained standing on the threshold, extremely startled at seeing Lorinser sitting in the corner of the sofa, with a book before him, from which even her entrance did not at once make him take his eyes.

The little lamp with the green shade was burning near him on the table, and lighted up the remarkable face with the high bare forehead, the firmly-closed mouth. There was no sign of excitement about him ; and as he now fixed his eye on Christiane's dark figure, who dumb and motionless seemed hardly to believe her own eyes, a stranger could not have imagined that this was a guest acting the master of

the house towards its mistress, so calm and friendly was the smile with which he greeted her.

"Good evening," he said. "You are late. I hope you will excuse my having in the mean time made myself at home here. I have provided myself with light and warmth; and all this long time—but, good God!" he exclaimed, interrupting himself suddenly—"what is the matter with you, Christiane? You are as pale as death, and are trembling; do take off your damp cloak, come—it is warm in the corner of the sofa. Will you tell me where you keep your tea-machine? The warmth will bring you back into life."

"Leave me!" she uttered in a hoarse voice, pushing away his hands, which were trying to take hold of her icy fingers. "I don't need anybody—I am quite well; only I am astonished, angry to find you here, after having so lately told you plainly enough that I do not wish for your visits—that I would *never* receive you again."

"And for that very reason am I here," he replied with the utmost calmness, allowing his eyes to wander up to the ceiling of the room; "you repelled me as people only repel those whom they hate with all their might and main or—whom they love just a little and therefore fear. Do you think that a man will bear that without at all events wishing to know to which of these classes he belongs? I at all events, even if you were not as much to me as you are, am not the man to obey blindly. It has left me no peace; you see me here, Christiane, to ask one question; when I have got my answer I will go. Things must be clear between us."

She had sunk into a chair close to the window. The damp cloak still hung about her, but the bonnet she had torn off, as if its strings were strangling her. Now as she gazed fixedly at the ground, he thought she was considering his words.

But it was only because she heard Edwin's step

overhead, and her life seemed to return to her. She forgot that he had asked her a question; nay, she even forgot his presence in the room.

"You hesitate how you shall answer, Christiane," he began again, "and I do not wonder at it. However much I may wish that all should be clear between us, I do not wish to hurry matters. Perhaps I ought hardly to hope for anything better than that your feelings towards me should be a sort of twilight, wondrously made up of dark hatred and dawning affection, so that neither gains the victory. Such a state may be strange and uncomfortable to your impetuous, determined nature. You think to get rid of it by sending away him who has been the cause of it all, but you are mistaken, Christiane. However much you may deny it, I know that I am too much to you to be expelled so easily from your life. You must go further; you must learn either to hate me thoroughly or to love me. No one has ever yet been indifferent to me—no one that is capable of strong feelings."

He had gone nearer to her, and now stood by her side with his arms crossed, looking at her profile, which in the green light of the lamp stood out distinctly against the dark window. His proximity, his soft calm way of speaking, the confidence with which he kept his place, made her more and more angry. With a hasty, indignant gesture she threw her cloak over the back of the chair, and stood up.

"I must earnestly beg you to leave me alone," she said; "I will say nothing further about the way in which you crept in here if you will now respect my wishes. If you had really the knowledge of mankind of which you boast, you would not be mad enough to imagine that I could ever allow you to have any power over me, either for good or for evil; our natures are too thoroughly antagonistic."

"You speak like a child," he answered calmly, "or you do not know what you say. If heaven and hell

did not lie between us, could we ever be anything to one another? There can only be attraction where there is opposition, antagonism. What would a victory be without a struggle? What you are to me, Christiane, I know only too well. What I am—or may become—to you time will show you, however much you may thrust it away from you. Or do you know any other man," he continued, fixing his eyes on her face, "who in the hour in which you are abandoned by everybody, in which you feel more miserable than you have ever done before, would come to you, would put out his hand to save you, and would make your life, which you are ready to throw away as a useless possession, again worth living?"

A gleam like lightning shot forth from her dark eyes. Contrary to his habit he did not flinch under it, and concealed the triumph which he felt at having touched her secret wound by his audacious guess.

"Who told you that I felt miserable?" she cried passionately. "And if it were so, how do you know that I would not prefer a thousand times to remain so rather than allow myself to be saved by you and your God? If you were right, and if I were abandoned by everybody, would you rob me of the only thing I have left—my own personality, my freedom, my solitude, in which I need render no account of what I suffer? You asked me what feeling it is that keeps me at a distance from you. Well, if you will know, I have a *horror* of you! The very first time I saw you I discovered the demon by which you are possessed, to whom nothing is sacred—not even the sorrow of a poor unhappy woman—who would gain universal power simply to satisfy his own selfishness, and who therefore does not look upon one whom others despise or overlook, one who is loved by nobody, one whom all joy avoids, in fact, one such as I am—as too insignificant to make use of. But you are making a mistake; and neither your heaven nor your hell

will help you. You shall not see me again as sure as I——”

“Silence!” he cried authoritatively. “Do not abjure your own salvation; do not call up the demons which are only watching for such words to ruin souls. Besides, no solemn words are necessary. If to-day I speak in vain—believe me, Christiane, I also am proud, and have the strength to suffer for my pride—then it will be *I* who give way to you. But till then you *must* hear me; you are too just to condemn unheard.”

He drew a deep breath as if to renew his courage for what he had to say. Then suddenly in his gentlest voice, which when he chose he could make strangely fascinating, he said:

“Pray sit down quietly. I will try and express myself shortly. But I see you are very much exhausted. You have just been suffering very severely—do not deny it, Christiane. I have the clear sight of a yearning, jealous heart. I could not indeed tell you what or who has made you suffer, but your heart is still trembling from the effects of the blow. Is it not so?”

He was silent, and looked at her in suspense. She was looking straight before her—her lips trembled. “You are a fiend,” she said; “but go on, go on; let there be an end to it!”

“An end!” he said. “Oh, Christiane, if you had any feeling, if your grief had not made you dead to the fate of others, you would spare me the trouble of saying anything further. Have I not already told you that from the very first moment I knew it to be my inevitable fate to belong to you? That I have struggled with all the powers of my soul and intellect to escape from this thralldom—but in vain? I have concealed from myself nothing that might be calculated to damp my longings: your obstinacy, your godlessness, your superiority to everything by which your sex is usually captivated and charmed. I said to myself

that I could hope for no success in this love, for no future, for no help in my own necessities ; that the love of domination which you ascribe to me—nay, which was perhaps once active within me—had never failed so shamefully as in my dealings with you. Everything that can wound the vanity, the pride, nay, even the honour of a man, or can damp his affection, I have borne from you. And now I ask you, Christiane, on your honour and conscience, do you still disbelieve in this powerful instinct, or, as I call it, in the mystical force which is alone capable of bringing me back to your feet in spite of everything ? To-day also I had quite made up my mind to expect nothing but misconception, contempt, ill-usage. But that is just the very wonder of love : which will rather be trodden underfoot by the beloved object than caressed by unloved hands. Have you *still* the heart to call me a devil who is longing to get your soul into his power ? Your soul—oh, my God ! I have given up all hope of that, grief as it is to me. I despair of ever plunging you into the depth of my life with God, of sharing with you the ecstasies of what I intuitively see and feel. But, believe me, Christiane, there is earthly compensation for the highest divine rapture of which all minds are not capable ; a compensation which ripens the soul, and at the same time prepares it for higher degrees of perception : the excess of passion which is both of the soul and of the senses ; which thrills through me when I only touch your hand, when your eyes fall on me, or your breath passes over my face. No one, however much he may have suffered, can issue from this bath of the soul unregenerated and unrefreshed ; and in truth, my friend, if only for your own sake, I wish I could inspire you with the courage to close your eyes and to precipitate yourself into the flames, from which the poor immortal creature will issue purified from all the dross of earthly affliction, renewed and divinely calmed.”

"This is the mystery," he continued, as she still remained silent. "No one comes to the Father but by the Son; no one can understand heavenly love who refuses earthly. You have not found your God, my friend, because you would not give yourself up to the God in man, to your Redeemer, who would have redeemed you from your own self. Do you know how Lucifer sinned that he was banished from the face of the Eternal One? He haughtily declared that he would stand in his own strength; in audacious innocence, he scorned to give himself up to the power of love. Now he is freezing in his flames, just as you are shaking with cold, Christiane, while your senses are on fire. My friend, you are still silent! Oh! that I had the tongue of an angel, to draw forth an echo from you, to thaw your benumbed heart! You say you have a horror of me. Oh! it cannot be that you fear a wretched man with no will of his own, whom a look from you restrains—it is the idea of your own fall which must precede your redemption, of the loss through which you will win, of the death through which you will live, which fills you with horror. 'Thus may a heart with horror shrink from love as it might do from death.' But you are very strong-minded, Christiane; you will shake off this cowardice and hazard all to gain all—death for life, sin for grace, or hatred for love.

"I have known it all along," he whispered, so that his voice seemed to lose all its tone while keeping its passionate vehemence; "from the first moment I saw you and understood your destiny, that this hour would come, however much you might resist, however painful it might be to my pride. I have seen you from the beginning as I now see you, and have often secretly laughed at your foolish sorrow because you believed you were not created to inspire love. You!—whose every look and word and gesture followed me day and night, turning the blood in my veins into fire,

as no woman had ever done before. You, who hate me, or rather who *believe* that you hate me—for this horror is the mother of longing—you have poisoned my dreams with cruel tortures, and made my wakeful hours miserable. If you only knew all—all that I have concealed, from childish pride—fool that I am, only that I may now all the more abjectly crouch at your feet to beg for mercy! And the Almighty knows that it has been only one thought, one voice within me bidding me look forward, which has given me the strength to bear all this: the thought that the hour would come when your heart would suddenly melt; when, carried away by the same storm, you would say to me: ‘You have suffered enough; take me to yourself. Let us lose ourselves in order to live again each in the other.’”

He had bent down closer and closer to her, his lips were almost touching her hair, his eyes were resting on her brow which was moist as if she were in mortal agony, she had closed her eyes tightly as if she were swooning. As she still remained motionless, he himself felt a sudden pang of anxiety. “Christiane!” he called, throwing his arms violently round her, while his mouth sought for hers. At the same moment he felt himself strongly repulsed.

She had sprung from her chair, and retired a step. He saw, in the feeble light of the lamp, that her eyes were wide open with an indescribable expression.

“You *are* a devil!” she said. “You must leave me on the spot, and if you have the diabolical courage to add a single word more I tear open the window and scream out ‘murder!’ into the quiet night. Do you hear what I say? If your own honour is not as indifferent to you as mine you had better go—go—go!”

She raised her voice and pointed so authoritatively towards the door that he was struck dumb. But he showed no signs of deeper emotion; indeed a smile played about his lips as he took his hat and coat from

the sofa, bowed slightly, and saying "Good night," left the room.

She heard him open the door outside which led on to the passage, and bang it again. She did not hear him go down-stairs; but she was acquainted with his noiseless steps. She could now believe herself to be at last alone.

But with solitude she only came to herself to feel still more miserable. She sank back upon the chair, and all her painfully-controlled anguish broke forth in wild tears.

What had she not been obliged to listen to? Though it revolted her to hear this dark enthusiast confounding the highest with the lowest, divine impulse with the maddest sensual desires, and undertaking with casuistical boldness to lull to sleep the pure voice of her nature, yet was it not *passion* which had blazed up in him?—was not this the talk of one, filled with uncontrollable longing, who stakes everything to attain his desire?—who calls on heaven and hell to come to his assistance? Was she then, after all, capable of exciting such a passion?—was there indeed one man who would venture all for her, whom neither her hatred nor her disgust could deter from following her with burning desires?

Where was the chilliness which had made her tremble during her long walk through the foggy night? Changed into burning heat! She had not yet fallen into the flaming abyss, but the flames which rose up from it were near enough to take away her breath.

She could not remain quiet on her chair, the air was so close and oppressive. She opened the window for a moment, but shut it again immediately, as the fog came in cold and wet as if from a vault, and made her shudder. The little fire in the stove had long been out, now the lamp went out also. She was in complete darkness, but she heeded it not.

Walking backwards and forwards, drawn hither and

thither by her restless thoughts, she threw off her clothes, more as if to cool herself, letting one thing after another fall just where she happened to be standing. As she was groping round she happened to come against her bed, upon which she sank down. "Sleep!" she cried aloud, and was quite frightened at her own voice; then she cowered suddenly under the coverlet as if she were safe there. But she did not shut her eyes; they were still burning too much from her long walk through the fog. Indeed it was of no use. She could not forget the eyes of the dreadful man whom she had just thrust from her; there they were, always shining before her all around in the darkness, through her closed lids. In her horror she tried to get rid of them by a charm which had hitherto never failed her when she had had secret need of it—namely, the conjuring up to her imagination of Edwin's form. But to-night this even was of no use; in spite of every effort she could not call up the features which were usually so distinct; only Toinette's charming face suddenly stood out clear and laughing before her, so that she felt a stab of pain, and drew the coverlet over her eyes as if to shut out the recollection.

The next moment she pushed away the covering, raised her head from the pillow, and sat half up as if afraid of suffocation. A weary moan broke from her lips, she pressed her bare arm against her face, and buried her teeth in her own flesh till the violent pain brought her to her senses.

"He is right," she said to herself. "There is but one magic—the magic of sin. If one had now a God to whom one could pray: 'Deliver us from evil!'—but a God who waits to be prayed to!"

So she sat for awhile upright in a bewilderment of sorrow, with her heart beating violently. Then by little and little she sank back, lay outstretched, and fell into a dose. The night grew stiller and stiller, the world seemed to her to be dead; she only with her

eternally unsatisfied longing for happiness could not die yet. Suddenly she fancied she heard a curious rustling noise, as if a bat were flying close down to the floor. A shudder ran through her, but she could not raise herself up; it was as if her members were rendered useless by approaching death. "Who is there?" she cried.

No answer.

"Is there any one in the room?"

A deathlike silence was the only answer.

"I am in a fever," she said to herself. "Oh, what a night! If it were only morning! Sleep! what would I give for an hour's sleep!"

She buried her head in the pillow, and now really did fall asleep. A dream brought her and Edwin together, but he was very different from what he had ever been to her. He smiled at her with his gayest expression, then he became serious again exactly as she had seen him to-day in the mirror when he was sitting opposite to the beautiful maiden in the window. But now all his whispering and his loving looks were for *her*. Her heart, weaned from happiness, could not believe it. "It must be a dream," were the words continuously sounding in her ear; but he continued to address her so persistently, so imploringly—with the tone and look of serious passion—only curiously enough in the same words which she had just heard from Lorinser, that her heart, full of blissful terror, could no longer resist the miracle of being loved by him! A thrill of joy ran through her. She saw him bending over her, she felt his breath quite distinctly on her face, her burning lips were half-open in the empty darkness, and now and then an unmeaning word fell from them. A piercing scream sounded suddenly through the quiet house—a scream in its frightful shrillness so little like a human voice, that the sleepers whose ears it might have reached were only startled for a minute, and, as everything seemed

quite quiet, fell peacefully asleep again, thinking it could only have been a dream—a mistake. Upstairs in the “tub” Balder moved in his feverish slumber, and asked whether it was he who had screamed.

Mohr had sprung up from his chair, and was trembling all over. He thought he had distinctly heard that the frightful cry had come from the room below. “Let me go down,” he whispered to Edwin. “It sounded as if some one were crying for help against a murderer.” Edwin held him back. “What are you thinking of?” he whispered. “If it were she, perhaps it was a nightmare.” They listened in suspense, but everything remained as silent as death. By degrees Mohr grew calmer, and continued to renew the application of ice.

But the old maid-servant was just going up-stairs for the last time that night with her lamp, in order to inquire up above whether they needed anything more, and was just passing Christiane’s door, as the frightful scream, which might have been caused by a death-struggle or by wild despair, sounded in her ears. The good-humoured creature only thought that the “Fräulein” had perhaps been attacked by a spasm. However, she did not waste a moment in consideration, but opened the door with the key which she always carried with her and entered suddenly. When the light of her little lamp fell before her into the little back-room she stood still in the entrance as if turned to stone, incapable of making a step either forwards or backwards. She saw the lady standing motionless by the wall near the head of the bed, with bare feet, with the coverlet wound firmly round her waist, her hair hanging loose over her shoulder, her right arm bare and stretched out before her with all the fingers extended, the eyes so wide open that the whites gleamed, fixed upon the dark figure of the man, who stood in the centre of the room equally motionless; not a syllable was spoken. There was only a kind of

guttural sound to be heard coming between her lips which were firmly compressed, and from where the man stood a thin sharp sound as of grinding teeth. Then with apparent calmness and without a sound he turned—he seemed to search for something on the floor—then making a kind of beckoning gesture towards the wall, he covered his face with the other hand, turned his back to the lamp, and glided, with his head uncovered, past the old woman and out into the dark passage. At the same moment the white form by the bed fell to the ground, and the light of the lamp, with which the maid rushed up to her, fell upon a deadly pale face distorted with the wildest spasm of a superhuman grief.

CHAPTER VII.

THE day was scarcely breaking when the door of the tub was softly opened and the herculean form of Heinrich Mohr took leave of Edwin with a silent shake of the hand. Late on the preceding evening he had come in order to ascertain whether Christiane had arrived safely at home, and being reassured by the light in her room, he had thought to calm the day's excitement by a visit to Balder and a quiet game of chess. When he heard and saw the poor boy's state, he could not be dissuaded from sitting up the whole night. Franzelius had rushed off to fetch the doctor immediately on Edwin's return. He found Marquard's door locked, and the servant had said with a significant smile that his master was not likely to return home that night. He had therefore hunted up another doctor, the next best that could be found, who had prescribed what was necessary; after which the night had passed quietly and without any fresh attack. The friends, both deeply shaken by the sudden shock, had scarcely exchanged a word during all these long hours, but had seated themselves close to the turning-lathe, each with a book which neither of them read, while they listened anxiously to the youth's uncertain breathing. Only towards morning did the sleep which had

been procured by opium become more peaceful and natural. Now Edwin insisted on Mohr's going away and trying to make up a little for his sleepless night; he only begged him to leave in passing a note at Toinette's house. It contained the following words:

"Do not expect me to-day. Whilst I was enjoying life in great draughts, death has knocked at our door. We still hope to defend our fortress against him, but till we are quite certain of this, I shall not leave my post at Balder's side. Whether I can forget you, whatever fate may befall me, you best know. From time to time I will send you news of us. If you wish for any books, I beg you to let me know.

"The jealousy of the 'so-called gods' has indeed surpassed itself on this occasion.

"EDWIN."

When Mohr went by Christiane's door he was just on the point of ringing the bell when it struck him that it was not six o'clock.

In the forenoon he came again. He had hardly been able to sleep an hour; a strange disquiet drove him back to the house in the Dorotheen Strasse which contained all that was precious to him.

While he was ringing for the third time at Christiane's door without producing any result, the maid came up with Edwin's breakfast (Reginchen did not show herself at all). She was visibly embarrassed when Mohr hastily inquired if she had not seen the lady, and when she was expected back.

"Fräulein Christiane had gone out before break of day," she answered sullenly. Whither she could not tell; she did not trouble herself so much about the lodgers.

This did not strike him very particularly; only to be again obliged to bear a delay before he should see her was very disagreeable. But as he meant to pass the whole day and the night up-stairs in the tub, he

hoped that he should at all events hear at once when she returned home.

He found Marquard up-stairs, doing his best to look reassuring.

"There is no immediate danger," he said softly, as Balder continued to sleep. "If he will only keep quiet, and not be at any more of his tricks. What devil possessed him to venture alone into the town, to make himself hot and tired in the foggy streets instead of taking a little drive in the sun!"

That he had done so, he had written with a trembling hand on a scrap of paper which he had made Edwin give him as soon as he had come to himself, in order that his written testimony should remove all suspicion of his having been anywhere else. Franzelius, who had come for a moment in order to inquire after the invalid, and had hardly dared to look him in the face, had held his tongue. Indeed he knew nothing certain. Then he had gone again, after making the condition that he should sit up on the following night. He said nothing now about the notion which possessed him of his being in danger of arrest. Here was another example of the power which the calm nobility of a pure and beautiful human being may exercise over coarser natures. Not a loud word was to be heard in the house; everybody moved on tip-toe; below in the workshop reigned a verily *herrnhutish* Sabbath peace, only interrupted by the suppressed grumbling of the foreman, if the apprentice, who was sent every two hours without shoes on his feet to make inquiries, remained away too long. Even the old gentleman on the first floor had been up-stairs to testify his sympathy to Edwin; and Madame Feyertag, the only one who had managed to catch a glimpse of the invalid, came down with wet eyes, declaring that he looked like a young Saviour as he lay in bed, and that it was heart-breaking to see such "a picture of a man" suffer so much. Reginchen, as we have said, did not appear.

The maid declared she was ill; no one could quite imagine her ill, but indeed no one had any thoughts to spare for any one but Balder; all were busy wondering whether he would ever get well again.

We must only except Heinrich Mohr, who in the death-like stillness of the house was listening with all his might for the sound of Christiane's door. But nothing moved down there, though hour after hour went by, and it had never happened before that she had remained out without sending word to the pupils who came to her house, and who were now dismissed by the maid with a shrug of the shoulders. The uncertainty made him more and more uncomfortable. He had never spent more painful hours than in the silent sick-room, by the friend to whom he could not even mention his fears, as Edwin's whole soul was occupied with his brother's state.

When it had become dark, Mohr's heart began suddenly to beat at the sound of a carriage driving up, and immediately afterwards of quick footsteps crossing the yard. Now the lowest steps of the steep staircase creaked, a woman's foot sped up-stairs, and stopped on the landing of the first story. But it was not bound for Christiane's rooms; with soft careful steps the late visitor mounted still higher, and coming to the door of the tub knocked cautiously.

Edwin, who was sitting by the lamp, and after his sleepless night had just closed his eyes, jumped up at once. "Come in," he cried softly, forgetting that nobody was allowed to enter the sick-room. The door opened, and Toinette's slender figure with the silk hood entered noiselessly.

Her first glance fell on the bed on which Balder was still sleeping peacefully. Then she laid her finger on her lips, and nodded to the friends who had sprung from their chairs and were staring at her in astonishment.

"Toinette—you here!—you have come yourself!"

"Hush!" she said. "He is asleep; I am going away at once. But I could not bear it; I was obliged to come and see for myself. You wrote to me so shortly—I still feel the terror. Tell me, is he out of danger?"

"We hope so. But will you not sit down?"

"No, no," she said, for the first time letting her eyes wander round the dimly-lighted room, and sighing involuntarily, which showed Edwin how miserable and uninviting the celebrated tub appeared to her. "I am in your way," she whispered. "Only let me take another good look at him. Thank you," she said, turning to Mohr, who moved the lamp nearer to the sleeper. They were all three silent for awhile.

"He is very beautiful!" she said softly. "What a gentle face! So that is your brother! Do you know I should have recognized him at once, though you are certainly not at all alike? What pretty small hands! They do not look as if they had learnt a trade. Now he is moving as if he were in pain; take away the lamp, we must not wake him."

"Will you not at all events sit down for a minute?" said Edwin, who had difficulty in mastering his emotion. "I cannot offer you a sofa. Neither philosophy nor the turning-lathe has managed as much as that."

"No, I cannot stay; I have kept the droschke because I only wanted just to inquire. What a sad fate! But at least he does not suffer. What does the doctor say?"

At this moment Balder moved his head, raised himself a little from his pillow, and slowly opened his eyes. They fell straight on Toinette's face, at which he seemed to look with a quiet curiosity, though without surprise.

Whether he took it for a dream or whether he were really awake it was not possible to know. "What a sweet scent the violets have!" he murmured. "Has the spring come back again so soon!" He smiled a little, then his face became sad again; slowly, as if

yielding to the hand of another, his eyelids fell, and with a deep sigh he sank back into his pillows.

"He thinks he has seen a vision, and now is dreaming on," whispered Edwin. "I wonder whether he will remember you to-morrow."

"Do not tell him that I have been here," answered Toinette, quickly drawing the hood over her head. "Good night. I am glad just to have seen him. If I had not I am sure I could not have slept."

Mohr bowed without saying a word. Meantime Edwin had lighted a little candle, and was preparing to escort her down-stairs.

"I am giving you trouble," she said, as she slowly descended the rotten steps. "But in truth it would be easy to break one's neck here. And then—I should like to tell you something in confidence. A request—but you must not be angry with me."

"What can I do for you?"

"It is not exactly for me; it is for your brother. It must not go on like this; something must be done for him; he cannot pass the winter up there in that damp air. I do feel so vexed now that I have managed so badly. A fortnight ago and I was double as rich. But you will treat me, won't you, as a real old friend, and take what I still have, so that he may get away to a warmer climate, even if not so far as to Cairo or Madeira?"

He stood still on the stairs. The candle shook in his hand.

"And you, Toinette? What is to become of you?"

"That does not matter. You know very well that sooner or later there will be an end to her Highness. And then after all I shall not have been quite useless."

"Toinette, what are you saying? You are jesting, and you—you really think that I would accept it?"

"If you did not it would be simply foolish. Are you a philosopher, and yet do you cling to such absurd prejudices? Is there anything which one human being

can give to another which deserves so little thanks as miserable money? I thought you despised it as much as I do. But I see you are no wiser than other men, who never hesitate a moment to take everything from a girl—love, life, and honour; but so soon as it is a question of a few paltry coins, they grow stiff with incomprehensible pride. Go! I see that you do not care half as much for your brother as I do!”

She sprang hastily and impatiently down the stairs, and ran across the yard so quickly that his candle went out.

When he helped her into the carriage he whispered: “We will talk about it another time. But whatever I do, or whatever I must leave undone, I thank you, Toinette; I thank you with all my heart—for being so—so sisterly—so kind—so——”

“Hush!” she said; “now be reasonable, and return to your nasty tub. I am not at all pleased with you, and cannot be easily satisfied by a few fine words. Think it over till to-morrow; I shall look in again towards evening.”

“No, dearest,” he said quickly, “that must not be. Though it was beautiful, and worthy of yourself to forget all considerations in the way you have done to-day—yet you shall not set tongues wagging without necessity. Did you see good Madame Feyertag’s face as we passed the shop-door? I could not bear any one to have a false opinion of you; and only think—if he were to see you again, and to fall in love with you? Is not one fever enough for him?”

“You are very foolish,” she laughed, but becoming serious at once; “if you really will write to me every day, telling me everything, I will stay at home. And you will think of what I said to you before. Good night!”

The droschke drove off, and Edwin looked after it for a bit, till the dim lamp turned the corner. For the first time in all these weeks it seemed to him no

longer impossible, but rather blissfully certain, that the ice had broken between them, and that spring had commenced which would make up for all he had gone through. At that moment everything else lay behind him—even Balder's fate. As if intoxicated by his feelings, he stood for a long time out in the dark street bareheaded and without a coat, and did not feel the first flakes of a November snow which fell on him.

CHAPTER VIII.

NEITHER did Christiane return the next night. Mohr, who had insisted on Franzelius's changing with him, and on giving up to him that night's watch, sat through all the long dark hours at the window, making no sound, but keeping his eyes immovably fixed on the door in the yard. When Edwin towards morning awoke from a short sleep, he found him still in the same position; his eyes were red and fixed, his face grey and drawn. To all questions he returned such crooked, half-comical answers through his set teeth, and behaved altogether so strangely, that Edwin, who had no notion of his state of mind, declared he must be ill, and insisted on his going home and to bed.

He obeyed mechanically as if he had no will of his own. Below in the yard he was met by the maid. From her he learnt that early that morning a commissioner had brought a letter to the landlady from Fräulein Christiane, who had been suddenly obliged to take a journey; when she should return was still quite uncertain. Mohr nodded as if the news were of very little importance to him. All the same though, under pretence of inquiring after Reginchen, he went into the shop, where he found Madame Feyertag.

"She is getting better," said the mother; "it was

nothing but affectation. The whimsical girl seemed to wish to amuse herself, and to sit with her hands in her lap for a change, and to let herself be waited on.

Then he alluded to the music-mistress, and her note was produced. It was in pencil, and was obviously written in great excitement, but nothing further was to be made out of it.

At this juncture Meister Feyertag made his appearance. He was in very low spirits; his Schopenhauerish philosophy seemed to have left him completely in the lurch. He was altogether wrapped up in Reginchen, and this was the first time that she had caused him any anxiety. He had always expressed himself full of respect for Christiane, but he was angry with her now. Never would he again admit an interesting woman into his house. That had always been his "maximum," for women must be women, and strong-minded women who lived single, who were musicians, and who were interested in the sorrows of the world, hardly belonged to the "weaker sex," whether they had moustaches or not. His good wife threw a meaning glance at him, and said with a shrug of her shoulders: "Everybody knows why you prefer that women should be weak, Feyertag. Instead of saying such stupid things, it would be much better for you to go to the police and just ask whether they know nothing."

With a still heavier heart, Christiane's faithful friend left the house. Twenty times did he repeat to himself that there was no reason for dread, that there was nothing unnatural in such a sudden departure, that artists always were unaccountable, and that were it a question of duty towards a friend or relation, the November weather would be no obstacle. Could she not have been sent for by a sick friend?—or could not her co-operation in some country concert have been required? Nothing was more probable. And yet—when he thought of the agitation with which she had

left the Turkish tent, of her sudden disappearance—and if everything were as it should be, why had he this heavy heart?—this secret anxiety which prevented him from breathing freely, and made him imagine a hundred sorrowful things? He spent the day as well, or as badly, as he could, went to make inquiries of Adele; but neither had she seen her friend again since that evening; and at dusk found himself again in the tub, where after all he was most at ease. When she came back he would be near, and would know it, he thought to himself.

“The day had passed tolerably; Marquard was satisfied,” Edwin said. How Balder felt when he was not asleep was not easy to ascertain. He had not said one word, except that he felt all right. But he was well known; he had always denied his sufferings. Happily he really did sleep most of the time, and without narcotics. A deep exhaustion of all his powers seemed to be the result of the attack.

And so he was sleeping, when in the evening a very modest knock at the door disturbed Edwin. Outside on the landing, where the staircase was now lighted up by a night-lamp, stood a figure wrapped in a little old-fashioned cloak, with a high collar, in which Edwin only recognized the Zaunkönig, when the embarrassed little gentleman had mentioned his name.

He had only heard of Balder's serious illness that day at noon, when the apprentice had brought him a pair of shoes. Since then he had not been able to rest; indeed his daughter and the professorin, who had happened to be at his house, had urged him to come and inquire at once. Also he was to inquire whether the ladies could do or send nothing in the way of nursing or feeding; the professorin placed at his disposal her whole winter store of syrups, and her cook, who was accustomed to cooking for invalids. He said all this in such a beseeching friendly tone, that Edwin was quite touched, and pressed his hand.

He would certainly remember this kind offer, when the time of convalescence had arrived! Would he like to see him for a moment?

The little gentleman entered the room on tip-toe, politely greeted Mohr, with whom he was unacquainted, and then stood motionless by the side of Balder's bed. Suddenly he turned himself about, drew out his pocket-handkerchief, and made a great effort to smother the emotion which broke forth in violent tears. Not succeeding, he signed a farewell to Edwin, with his head turned away, and hurried out of the door.

"He has forgotten his hat," said Mohr; "I will run after the honest man, and will see him down the stairs. Anyhow, I meant to leave you, Edwin. Our tribune will not keep you waiting very long."

On the landing before Christiane's door he found the little painter, who had waited to recover himself a little and to dry his wet face.

"Here is your hat, Herr König," he said.

The painter nodded his thanks, put it on without looking at it, and went on softly down the stairs. He seemed so absorbed in thought that, contrary to his usual politeness, he paid no attention to his companion.

But before the house, when Mohr was about to part from him, the painter suddenly held him fast by the coat-sleeve and said: "If you have time, my dear sir, I would beg you to walk a few steps with me. I should like to tell you something. You are an intimate friend of the two brothers. The Herr doctor has often mentioned your name. Perhaps also you may know how it has happened that I—that the lessons which he was giving to my daughter—that I found it necessary to put an end to them. My Creator knows that it was not easy for me to do so, nor for my daughter, as you will believe! It was like a punishment to her, and yet she deserves none. But is it not written: 'Whom I love I chasten'—though really it

was not meant for a chastisement. Does not our Heavenly Father deny us much that we like and wish for, and we know not wherefore? Of course I do not mean to compare our human understanding with the perfect wisdom of God; I only say this because you may perhaps have thought me hard-hearted. But indeed I was not; perhaps it grieved me even more than it did my dear child; and yet I had no misgiving that she would feel it as deeply as she has done. I tell you she has become another creature; she is no longer a girl of eighteen or nineteen, but rather like one wearied out, who has nothing more to look forward to in this world. My heart bleeds when I see her going about like this, never complaining, and often with a smile, but so pale; and that is why I could not restrain my tears when I saw your friend's brother lying on his bed of sickness. It suddenly struck me that I might see Lea, my child, lying like that, and I—I an old man;—no, no—my Lord and God, in Thy goodness Thou wilt not lay that upon me—this cup——”

His feelings were again too much for him, and he stood still, hiding his face in his handkerchief. In order to rouse him Mohr said inquiringly: “You wished to say something to me?”

“Yes, indeed,” said the little gentleman, commanding himself. “You see, I know that your friends have not exactly more than they want, and an illness—you understand what I mean. I am still in the Herr doctor's debt. If you could only prevail upon him under these circumstances to——”

“I doubt whether my friend would hear of such a thing; but you may be without anxiety. We are half communists, and for Balder's sake, Edwin would not be too proud to let his friends help him.”

“That is just it,” sighed the little gentleman. “I he only knew all the good friends he possesses! Even the professorin—an excellent woman—believe me, in

spite of everything she has a great respect for the excellent young man. But don't you see, as he so openly resists being a child of God, as indeed he knows no heavenly Father, can you blame an earthly father for shrinking from seeing his only child lose her relationship to God through disputations and philosophy? She is so young, shall she give her mind, her intellect into the keeping of a man who neither knows nor wishes to know anything of God? Better that she should suffer in her temporal weal than that her soul should suffer."

At any other time Mohr would hardly have refrained from making fun of the little gentleman and driving him into a corner. Now as he walked by his side in the raw November air, he was only listening with half an ear. His thoughts were far away; but at the sight of every muffled female figure, whose gait or bearing bore the most distant resemblance to Christiane's, he received a strange pang.

"If only we had got through the dreadful winter," said the little man, chatting on confidentially, without taking the silence of his gloomy companion amiss. "Well, with God's help we shall get through till the spring, and then I shall have no more fear for my daughter. The doctor is of opinion that change of air, amusement, a journey, would be of more use to her than anything else. Two or three months ago I should have been alarmed at such an opinion. How is a poor artist—whose talent has never been very prolific—who is without patronage—to take such steps as that? But just when one's need is greatest God's help is nearest; how clearly have I felt that! Only think! dear sir, what happened to me. In this year's Exhibition, which was closed about a fortnight ago, I had only one little picture—times had been bad; I had been obliged to devote myself almost exclusively to my paid work—wood-engraving. Well, as I have said, I could not quite make up my mind to give up

the Exhibition, though indeed I should hardly have been missed. So just before the pictures were sent in, I finished an old one of mine—one of my little ‘hedge pieces,’ which perhaps you may have seen here and there—my specialty, in which I am quite safe from competition. But what happens? On the last day, when I had given up all hope for this time of selling my ‘hedge picture,’ in spite of its moderate price of forty thalers, I walked through the gallery feeling quite resigned, and thinking, ‘It is no wonder that you are left out; everybody can do more than you!’—when I suddenly saw three gentlemen standing just before my little daub; they were talking eagerly and kept pointing to the picture, so that at first I almost thought they were making fun of it; but no, they were talking as seriously and as urgently as if they were standing before heaven knows which masterpiece, from which a whole theory of æsthetics might be demonstrated. Then I recognized one of the gentlemen, a certain connoisseur, Baron L., and he recognized me, and whispered something to the taller of the two other gentlemen, who had something very distinguished in his appearance, whereupon they talked to each other in undertones for a bit, and the distinguished gentleman looked at me through his eye-glass, so that I felt quite embarrassed and wanted to creep away. But the baron called after me, and begged me to come back that he might present me to his Excellency Prince Bataroff, who wished to make my acquaintance. Well, I could not run away from that. Then I had to answer a number of questions, especially about the way in which I paint, about the meaning of my pictures, and even why I paint, as if every one did not know that painting is as natural to a painter as eating and drinking. At last, after the prince had said something in Russian to his companion, he asked me what I made on an average in a year with my painting. Well, I added that up quickly enough and named the

amount, which is far from being a princely revenue, and which would not by itself enable me to live. Then the Russian prince said, 'Would you engage on your word of honour to let me have *everything* that you paint; but not to touch a brush except when I gave you a commission? I would pay you a fixed yearly sum, four times as much as you named to me. But you understand me, so soon as you break your word'—here the professor broke in: there was no fear of that with me, I was known as a man of principle and religion; but he made a sign to me to agree at once to the proposal.

"Tell me yourself, Herr Mohr, for my child's sake could I hesitate? I accepted with joy, and now I am in a position to take my daughter to Switzerland next May; perhaps even a bit into Italy. Am I not right? Are not the decrees of Providence wonderful?"

"Wonderful indeed," returned Mohr, "so much so that in your place I should have been curious to trace out the connection of things. But as you own to being a specialty, how do you explain the fancy of this modern Macænas for collecting a whole hedge of Zaunkönigs?"

"That is exactly what I afterwards asked the baron; for *entre nous* the prince did not strike me as being completely accountable, and it seemed to me that it would be wrong to take advantage of a monomania. I know very well that I am nothing but a mediocrity; even I myself cannot put up with too many of my paintings at once. But the baron reassured me. He declared that my salary would be no more to the prince than a bottle of wine to me, in which I might indulge on some great occasion, and that besides, his mind was a very refined one, so that he was really interested in my whole individuality as an artist. Well, a man is happiest when he has his own way. So now I am a Russian court painter, and the first quarter was duly paid to me in advance, but there has been no word of

a commission, and the sketch of my lagoon, which I sent on approval, and which I would gladly have finished, has not been returned to me. I only got a message that it was all right, but his Highness would take time to consider what should be his next order.

"I congratulate you," said Mohr, drily. "If you are right and are nothing but a mediocrity it must at all events be an *aurea mediocritas* to which one would hardly object."

"My dear sir," said the painter good-humouredly, without a shade of offence, "everything turns out for the best to those who love God. I had to put up with my mediocrity when no Russian prince gilded it. For don't you see if all creatures were the same size; if all men, animals, and plants were tropical giants such as only grow in certain regions, what would become of the bright charming diversity of God's beautiful world? Indeed to *belong to it at all*, seems to me such a great happiness that I should pity the artists very much who would wish themselves out of the world altogether because they are only an average size, or even below mediocrity."

Mohr cast a searching side-look at him. Were these words, which struck him on his tenderest point, aimed directly at him? Perhaps Edwin had told the little gentleman of his symphony and his comedy, and this sermon on content was for the purpose of putting an extinguisher on his unfruitful zeal.

But the cheerful innocent mien of the painter made him feel that his suspicion was unfounded, and the sharp retort which was trembling on his tongue remained unspoken. Moreover, they had reached the little house on the canal while they were talking, and the little man begged his companion so urgently to come in for a moment, and to warm himself with a cup of tea, that Mohr in spite of his dejection could not say no. Indeed, whither should he go? The wind blew from the river like ice, all life on the banks seemed frozen,

and in his solitary bachelor lodging nothing awaited him but a dark night full of anxious dreams.

So he allowed himself to be conducted through the wood-yard, along the narrow path between the high piles of timber, up to the door through which a thin thread of light welcomed him.

CHAPTER IX.

LEA was seated in her little sitting-room at the table on which the lamp was standing and the urn was singing. She seemed, however, to have busied herself neither with this nor with the book which lay unopened before her, but to be absorbed in her thoughts as she sat in the lonely room. She sprang up as the men entered; her first look fell on the stranger, and something like disappointment passed over her face. Had her ear deceived her, and had she thought it was Edwin accompanying her father? She did not speak. With her eyes cast down she listened to the report of the invalid. Her father introduced his guest as the friend of her former teacher; she bowed in obvious embarrassment. Only by degrees, as Mohr himself thawed and began to talk of his old college friendship with Edwin, did she grow more at ease, and played the part of hostess charmingly. She pleased her guest very much; indeed he wondered that Edwin had never spoken of her looks, which were certainly worth speaking of, though her paleness, and an appearance of ill health, made her look older than she really was, and her movements, when she put no restraint on herself, were weary and lifeless. After she had poured out the tea, she took up some work and seated herself

in an arm-chair, somewhat sideways, not far from the niche where stood the bust of her mother. A warm glow lighted up the marble features, and Lea's complexion was so transparent and pale that, particularly when the beautiful brilliant eyes were turned on her work, her guest was almost painfully struck by the likeness of the living with the dead. Thereby he fell back again into his own sad anxieties and misgivings, and if the little painter had not carried on the conversation with unalterable cheerfulness, a gloomy silence would at last have fallen on the cosy room.

But with every quarter of an hour the Zaunkönig grew more and more happy in his rest. When Mohr, for politeness' sake, asked him to show him some of his work, he fetched a large portfolio out of his studio with a genuine bashfulness, through which, however, a quiet satisfaction showed itself, and began to spread the drawings which it contained before his guest.

"These are early sketches," he said. "When my wife was still alive it was my habit when we were sitting together in the evening—that child used to go to bed early then—to indulge my fancies on a sheet of white paper. But they were not then so modest and humble as they are now; they allowed themselves all sorts of antics, as if they belonged to a great painter who would be able to carry them out with his hand. Even at that time I was well aware that I was neither a Poussin nor a Claude, but when we were alone like that, and when I had struggled all day honestly as a common-place artist, I felt I might indulge myself in dreaming away a few evening hours, and imagining all that I should paint if I were only one of the great ones. Now I have these fits less often, and when they do come, I take good care not to perpetuate them. If they are too strong for me, I work away with a bit of charcoal on a sheet of paper, and my sleeve is then good enough to wipe out everything, down to the last line."

Mohr turned over the drawings, which were certainly rather ambitious, and the manner in which he expressed himself on this and that, and discovered the artistic meaning in lines which were often most inadequate, seemed to please the painter excessively.

When the cuckoo-clock struck eleven, and the guest rose, saying he feared he had remained too long, his little host invited him in the most friendly manner to come back again soon, if he had not found the time pass too slowly at their modest tea-table.

"The portfolio," added he with a smile, "will certainly not make its appearance again."

"My dear sir," answered Mohr, "I fear you would regret your friendly offer if I were to make use of it. I have in me a vein of 'the houseless one, the monster without rest or peace,' and I like you too much not to spare you a more intimate acquaintance with myself. However, nobody can answer for himself. If some day or other I have an unbearable attack of the blue devils, I will come and beg you to allow me to spend a quiet hour in this sofa corner. Your tea-urn sings so melodiously that it makes one quite forget the inharmonious weather which is reigning everywhere in this world."

He gave his hand to father and daughter, and left the little house filled with conflicting emotions.

"What is one to wish?" he exclaimed to himself, as fearless of the wind and snow, he stood still by the railing of the stream, staring down into the comfortless black water. "This man, for whom everything must turn out for the best, because being a child of God he believes himself to be well cared for both in time and eternity—who is satisfied with everything; with his incapacity, with his weakness, with what he can do, and with what he cannot do—who makes a virtue of every trouble, even out of the misery of his only child, whom all the same he loves—is he worthy of respect or of horror? And his love of God, which ennoble

everything, which shows him a paradise behind every hedge, is it not after all really love of self? Is not this piety, apart from its intellectual blindness, merely a moral self-indulgence at the expense of others? I, who have never set foot in this house before, cannot look at that poor girl without compassion and indignation at her lot; and her own father, confiding in the favour of his God, who will certainly bring back the lost sheep to the fold if only the wolf is first disarmed, has the heart to see the beautiful, thoughtful, patient being wearing itself away for lack of the right nourishment! In truth, we savages are the better men! If I were ever to have a daughter——”

He did not finish the sentence. The storm suddenly drove such a cloud of snow into his face, that he was forced to close both mouth and eyes for awhile, and cling to the paling. When he looked up again, wonderful to say, the storm seemed to have exhausted itself; indeed the moon was peeping with a misty glimmer through the black clouds, and for a moment the houses on the quay could be seen, in which, as it was close on midnight, there was only a light here and there.

“It is nearly time to go home,” he muttered. “Everybody is asleep down there in those boats. What, I wonder, are the feelings of a man who enters the world in the cabin of a Spree boat, and dies there after having gazed through his window for sixty years at this *cloaca maxima*!”

He had not walked a hundred steps along the river when he remarked below, on one of the largest boats, which was laden with wood, a number of men pressing together in a knot on the deck. Their movements betrayed a busy but stealthy excitement.

It was only now and then that the light of a red ship's lantern fell on the group, and illuminated the broad faces and light hair of men and women who were standing round something which lay on the ground,

and seemed to be quarrelling among themselves as to what they should do with it, but with lowered voices as if it were of importance to keep the matter private. Above, on the water-steps exactly opposite to the scene, Mohr stopped and strove to discover the cause of the nocturnal concourse.

A shrill female voice raised itself above the buzzing and muttering.

"To bring trouble on us with this wet lump of ill-luck! We have had quite enough of it."

"Why this is now the third beautiful present we have had this week; first the tipsy organ-man, then the new-born brat—and now——"

"Do not scream so, mother," said a stout fellow soothingly, who had just seized the lantern from the hands of his neighbour and was lighting up the face of the prostrate form. "You will bring the police about our ears."

"And that I will do," cried the woman; "nothing shall stop me! When we drew the sewing-girl out of the water last Easter, and I put her into my own bed and made her some hot tea, what did the wanton creature do? Why, stole six pairs of gloves that same day out of a shop, and because we had had her with us we were called up by the police as if we had hidden stolen goods. And so I am to be soft-hearted again? God forbid! To the police at once with all these suicides, and let us have done with it. Here, Carl, put on something warm and run as fast as you can run till you find a watchman. Say we have pulled an unknown woman out of the water, who was as dead as a rat," &c.

"Stop!" cried a hoarse voice suddenly.

All turned to the steps, and were astonished to see Mohr rushing down in great strides and across the narrow plank on to the boat. The next moment and he had torn the lantern out of the hand of the boatman, and had sunk on his knees by the unconscious

form. The light fell strong on the pale face; round the half-open lips could be seen the convulsion of departing consciousness. The dark eyebrows were painfully drawn together; very little could be seen of the eyes under the weary, closed lids. This stiff almost masculine face had received from death an expression of soft childlike helplessness, which seemed to have a power of softening even these hard hearts.

Mohr let the lantern fall so that it went out. In a moment it was black night on the deck. When the wife of the boatman, who had been completely struck dumb by the sudden interruption, had relighted the lantern, Mohr rose.

"How long is it since you found this lady and drew her out?" he inquired.

"Not half an hour. But no one can tell how long she may have been in," said the man to whom the boat belonged. "I had fallen asleep, and suddenly woke up because I thought of my new jacket lying out here, and that if it went on snowing so it would be ruined by to-morrow. Well, as I came here to the rudder, I heard something in the water, like a block of wood against the wall. The young woman must have a good hard skull that it was not stove in. Do you know her, sir?"

Mohr did not answer. He had enough to do to keep his composure, and to think without loss of time what would be the best course to take. •

"Have you anything to carry her on?" he inquired. "You shall have three thalers if you will only carry the lady a hundred steps to a house where she will be taken in. I will answer for everything else; and if you get into trouble with the police for not having given information, I will take all the responsibility. But quick! before it is too late! There, lay her down and cover her with this cloak; and now look alive!"

Not a word more was spoken. His decided,

commanding manner, the promised reward, and the prospect of getting rid of the whole uncomfortable responsibility made the boatmen bestir themselves. Two sturdy men lifted the motionless form on to a board which they used for unlading their baskets of fruit, and passing a strap over her chest, bound her firmly to it. Her clothes and hair were still dripping when she was lifted up and carefully carried up the steps.

Then the bearers set off with their burden, while the others remained behind in the boat and divided the money. Mohr alone followed the convoy. He had not ventured to touch the lifeless figure; only as she was being carried up, and he had remained at her side to prevent her from falling, her hand as it hung down touched his face, and its icy coldness seemed to freeze his blood.

Before the house of the painter he bade the bearers stand. He had to pull the bell at the gate of the wood-yard many times before he heard any one moving. The minutes seemed frightfully long! How could he tell that a hundred respirations more or less might not make all the difference as to the possibility of restoring the breath of life to that motionless bosom?

Now at last he heard a door opening behind the stacks of wood; a faint glimmer of light came towards him; he heard the voice of the Zaunkönig, asking what could be wanted at such an hour. A few words sufficed to set the good-hearted little man breathlessly to work. With trembling hands he at once opened the little wicket by the side of the large gate, and without another word the sad procession moved along the dark path and up to the little house. •

CHAPTER X.

At this same hour the little boudoir of the singer, whose acquaintance we made in the Turkish tent, looked bright and cheerful. A branch candlestick, with five lighted candles, stood on the table, which was prettily arranged, and at which the cheerful beauty was sitting with her friend, reposing on her abundant laurels after the first representation of a grand opera.

"You were charming to-night, Adele," said Marquard, pushing back the plate filled with oyster shells, and rising in order to light his cigar at one of the candles. "Indeed you grow with every part, charming witch ! and if one of these fine days you grow quite beyond my reach I shall not be in the least surprised. But you have one talent, which, more than either your singing, or your bewitching power of making all the stalls madly in love with you, extorts the highest respect from me."

"And that is ?"

"Your talent for eating oysters. You are laughing, Adeline ; but believe me, I mean it quite seriously. I would pledge myself to describe the intellect and disposition of any woman with whom I had spent ten minutes without further conversation than a mutual eating of oysters, and never to make a mistake, pro-

viding it were not her first *début* in this noblest of arts, when of course the most gifted may demean themselves clumsily."

"Well, and what have I done in this line?"

"First call Jenny, and let her carry out these bouquets which have been thrown to you to-night. Champagne, havannas, sea-water, and the scent of roses—it is too much of a good thing, and we shall have headaches. Besides, I am above the vanity of liking to see a beautiful maiden surrounded by roses which have been presented by her less fortunate adorers."

"You are shamefully *blasé*!" laughed the actress. "I should have got rid of you long ago if you were not so amusing. But now be quick with your oyster theory."

"No," said he with a quiet smile, as he leant back comfortably on the little sofa; "another time. It is far more profound than you can imagine. All subjects which are on the borderland, belonging neither to the senses nor to the soul, are delicate, and my scientific conscience is much too tender to allow of my making short work with such subtleties. Moreover, after your assertion that you only bear with me because I am amusing, I should be a fool if I were to hold forth to you on a chapter out of the physiology of enjoyment, instead of setting to work to carry it out practically for a bit. You might do me the favour, child, to take off your head-dress. As you well know, I have a foolish passion for playing with your little shock head."

"By no means," she answered. "First, you will give me a light for my cigarette, and then I wish to have the explanation which you promised me yesterday—why you never intend to marry. Don't you remember I had to go to a rehearsal and you to a consultation?"

"And you have not yet found the answer for your-

self? Oh, Adeline, your otherwise clear understanding is darkened by your passion for me!"

"Shameless, conceited man! He is quite incorrigible," laughed the girl, as she carelessly loosened the heavy artificial plaits from her hair, and laid them on the chair near to the champagne cooler.

She really did look prettier with her short dishevelled locks.

"Ah, now you are yourself once more," said Marquard, contemplating her with unconcealed satisfaction through his gold spectacles, which were lying near him on the table. "And now, as you have laid aside all falseness, I will honestly confess to you that I shall never marry, from a purely sentimental feeling; but on my gravestone shall be inscribed, 'Here rests the virgin-souled Marquard.'"

"You sentimental!" She laughed a clear ringing laugh.

"Certainly, my beautiful friend. You shall judge for yourself. Would you not think it a bit of sentimentality if I were to be susceptible to my wife's unfaithfulness, whilst continuing myself (as would no doubt be the case) to be a polytheist, as I have always been? And don't you see, I cannot change, and yet I am too honest to expect a good virtuous creature to be satisfied with such a broken fragment of a man."

"As if the right woman would not improve you! she would make a *whole* man and a husband out of you!"

"Improve me!" he sighed, with a comically tragic look and voice. "In case you should ever be looking out for a faithful husband, in God's name beware of doctors. We ought by rights to take an oath of celibacy, like the Catholic priesthood. He must be a stone or a saint who is not infected by the sins which you confess to him. And I much prefer to receive the confession of a broken heart to that of the contusion of a knee. Why are you moving away from me?"

"Because you are a frivolous man, and have drunk too much champagne. Besides, it is late!"

"Too late to go away now. I left word at home that my servant was not to expect me. As I fortunately have no wife, I will for once do as other husbands do, and will sleep a night without being disturbed either by domestic or foreign troubles. Am I not right, my charming friend? Here I am allowed to be no doctor, but a man."

He threw away the cigar, and with a glance of tenderness at the girl went up to her, took both her hands, and rocked her backwards and forwards.

At this moment Adele's waiting-maid entered with a visiting-card in her hand. A gentleman, she said, was waiting in the ante-room, and he wanted particularly to speak to the doctor.

"Tell him he may go to the— Why did you let out that I was here?"

"He did not even ask. He made me take the card at once, and in spite of all I said—"

"Mohr! Good Heavens! what brings him here at this hour? Perhaps Balder— You will excuse me, Adele; but I must hear what it means."

He rushed in such haste from the room that he upset the basket in which the actress's little terrier had been gently sleeping.

While she was trying to soothe the frightened animal, which barked violently, Marquard had hurried into the ante-room to inquire after Balder.

"I believe everything is all right in the 'tub,'" said Mohr. "But you must come with me at once; there has been an accident; we have not a minute to lose."

"Come, come, my friend," replied Marquard, returning suddenly to his tone of indifference, "if that is the state of the case, four houses further down to the right when you leave this house there lives a very worthy colleague of mine, who as yet has but little practice, and probably will be more ready to

obey your humane summons than I am just at this moment."

"You will come with me, Marquard," said Mohr in a hollow voice, which trembled with terrible anxiety. "*Christiane* has drowned herself; we have pulled her out of the river. God knows whether it was not too late!"

He staggered, as he with difficulty uttered these words; in spite of his strength he seemed altogether unhinged; yet he did not take the chair which Marquard pushed towards him.

"Oh, really! you should have told me so at once," grumbled the latter. "That is another pair of boots. Just sit down for two minutes. I will only fetch my hat. The little one within need know nothing for the present."

Indeed he returned immediately out of Adele's room, and not a word, nor a look on his grave face, betrayed that he had been so ungently disturbed out of his bacchanalian enjoyment. Only when they were seated below in the droschke, which Mohr's promise of double fare excited to a mad pace, did he say to his gloomy silent companion:

"Among all the hard, disagreeable things which are expected of us doctors, nothing is more painful to me than having to do my cursed duty in a case like this. Each individual owes one death to nature. But to wake up a poor creature like this, who thinks he has paid his debt, and to oblige him to lay down the whole amount over again, because on the first occasion he was not paid in the current coin of the country—it is a truly miserable piece of work, and is enough to make one hate the whole business. Four times have I been called to such a case, and each time, in the midst of the rubbing and manipulation, I have wished that it might be trouble thrown away."

"I hope that on this occasion at least—"

"Don't fear. The spirit of one's trade is stronger

than all philosophy or humanity. *Fiat experimentum et pereat mundus*, which means in this case *vivat*—a poor devil who has nothing to live for, but every reason for cursing his life. Christiane! Have you any idea what brought her to this? We have already had one example of her turn for taking French leave from cheerful company. Is anything known of her circumstances? An unhappy love affair? But you are like the stone guest!”

“Please forgive me if I am a very bad compensation for the company you have just left,” stammered Mohr. “I—my nerves are not of the best. It has been a hard blow; for between ourselves, this girl, whom others have not looked upon as exactly charming—in one word, I have cared a great deal about her.”

“Poor fellow!” murmured the doctor, searching in the dark for Mohr’s cold hand, which he gently pressed.

Then they said nothing more. Mohr sat back in the corner of the droschke and stopped up his mouth with his pocket-handkerchief, and when they alighted before the wood-yard Marquard saw that his face was red and moist all over.

The little painter stood in the open doorway. “At last!” he cried. “We have not known what to do for anxiety and impatience. But there does seem to be a little hope. Lea is certain that she has begun to breathe. Here to the right, please; we have laid her on my bed in the studio.”

“You stay out, Heinrich,” ordered Marquard; “neither do I need the young lady. I shall be able to do everything by myself.”

He made a few more arrangements, said a few reassuring words to Lea, who came to meet him with a look of strange suspense, almost as if she were walking in her sleep, and then turned to the performance of his painful duty.

In the same room, where so short a time before they

had sat round the tea-table, chatting so cosily, the three now found themselves together again. But no one broke the silence. The painter had seated himself opposite to the bust, and seemed to be putting the solemn question of life or death to the dumb features. Mohr, with his hands crossed behind his back, walked up and down the room, restless like a caged wild animal, stopping for a moment after every twenty steps in order to listen to what was going on in the studio. Lea sat at the window gazing into the snowy world without. She did not move a finger, her eyes were closed; but not for a moment did she lose consciousness of what was going on around her. What paralyzed her was neither physical exhaustion nor yet the unnatural apathy which is a frequent result of great excitement. On undressing the lifeless stranger in order to wrap her in blankets, she had found under the wet icy garments a little leather case tied together with a red ribbon. Thinking that it might contain a letter which would give an explanation of what had occurred, or a card with the name, which Mohr had not mentioned, she had opened the little case without being observed by any one else. It contained neither letter nor card—only a photograph all spotted with the water, in which she at once recognized Edwin. We need add nothing to explain why she sat hour after hour at the window, with her thoughts far away.

At last, it might be four o'clock in the morning, she heard the door opposite open, and immediately afterwards Marquard entered.

“Good morning, good people,” he said drily. “I am only come to tell you that we have won the battle, and have driven away the enemy from all his positions. My adjutant, your most excellent old maidservant, Herr König, has orders to follow him, and to keep the field of battle free from all marauders; I myself will get a couple of hours’ sleep, and then

I shall have the honour of seeing you again. Good-bye."

He bowed carelessly and went. As he was groping for the door in the dark hall, he suddenly felt himself held fast from behind, and embraced by two trembling arms. Mohr lay sobbing on his neck.

CHAPTER XI.

BALDER's recovery advanced more quickly than it would have been possible to expect. In a fortnight he had made so much progress that he could leave his bed for a couple of hours, and with great care could even occupy himself a little; he could read, and could venture on joining in a quiet chat. His youthful strength seemed once more to burn brightly and to pour fresh life into all his organs. He had never been more cheerful than at this time, never shown himself more worthy of all the love which even by outsiders was manifested towards him. When the professorin, who had daily provided him with strengthening drinks, with *compotes*, or with tender chickens, was allowed at the end of ten days, in requital for all her motherly care, to come to him for five minutes, this short visit was sufficient to make the good woman fall completely in love with her charge. It was daily Madame Feyertag's first thought to go herself and inquire how the night had passed, to heat the stove, as the maid made too much noise about it, and Reginchen still kept her room, and to water the fine palm-tree, which Toinette had sent to the "tub" the very day after her visit, in order to prepare something pleasant for the eyes of the invalid to rest on.

She herself came no more; but every morning the short boy with the watery blue eyes came to fetch the last bulletin, which Edwin, true to his promise, put down each day in writing. These notes were the only thing which kept up their intercourse.

He had vowed not to leave Balder's side till he was quite well again, except at noon, when he had to go again to his lectures, and at that hour one of his friends took his place. Either Mohr came to play at chess, or Franzelius, who seemed at present to be without further occupation, seated himself with a book and read aloud, an art of which he was master. But not a word was exchanged with the invalid about that of which both their hearts were full. The names Christiane and Reginchen did not pass their lips, and the little painter also, who often made his appearance, had agreed with Mohr that the fate of the unhappy woman must not be mentioned in the sick room.

One fair sunny November day Edwin had gone as usual to the university, and Franzelius was preparing to read aloud a translation of Sophocles, when suddenly the boy, who was resting close to the window in a comfortable arm-chair which had been sent by the professorin, laid his thin white hand on the book and said—

"We won't read to-day, Franzel; I would rather have a chat with you. I do feel so well that talking does not tire me in the least; and how beautifully the sun is shining in the blue sky! It is such inexpressible joy to see it, that it is worth bearing all the ills of this life for that alone. Or don't you think so?"

"I cannot see it without thinking that it shines on the just and on the unjust, and that it sees more misery than happiness," answered the printer, looking up with dazzled but almost defiant eyes to the sky. "I wish that it might go out once and for ever, and with it all this wonderful lie which we call life."

"No, Franzel," said Balder quietly, "you are unjust

to the sun. If he really did know what he is about when he kindles life and sustains it, he would certainly have no reason for shame. Why do you call life a lie, Franzel? Because it has an end? But has it not had a beginning? and how has it in any way bound itself to last for ever? On the contrary, my dearest friend, it is very honest; it promises so little when it begins, and fulfils so much. Will you take it amiss that it cannot bestow on us all that we, unjust, dissatisfied dreamers that we are, require of it?"

"I do not like living," muttered the other, gloomily, and covered his eyes with his large hands. "No sooner does one get through one trouble than another breaks out, and he who has thoughts for the whole of mankind can never be at peace."

"Well, would it be altogether living if one were always at peace? Is sleep life? Or would it be living to sink into the empty dream of life which the beetle dreams, when, having climbed up the stalk after a drop of dew, he at last reaches it and drinks? Dear Franzel, if you were to rid the world of all its troubles life would not be worth the trouble of living."

"You are playing with words."

"No, I mean it literally, seriously. Lately I came upon a bit in Voltaire which is among the many true things he has said, especially of the masses for the masses—

‘The sorrows of our byegone days,
The threat’ning woes hid from our gaze—
Who’d bear of such a life the weight?
God caréd for the weal of men;
He form’d them frivolous and vain,
Which did their misery abate.’

Forgive the bad translation; I only extemporized it because I know that you cannot bear French. The sense is rendered quite faithfully, and it is a sense which exactly suits people who have no sense. Do you see, I only know one way of being unhappy, and that

is when any one *has* been created with a vain, frivolous nature. And therein lies the wisdom of this verse, that those who would be incapable of bearing painful recollections of the past, or anxiety for the future, have to thank nature that they can enjoy their poor present in their own thoughtless, careless fashion. So indeed they become not happy, but less miserable; as to the true rapture of life, of that they can know nothing. He only can feel that who is calm and devout enough, or, if you will, who has the gift to feel the past and the future in one. Though you are the very opposite of 'frivolous and vain,' you will perhaps not thoroughly understand a habit of mine which I have practised for years. Whenever I wished to make a regular holiday of life, and thoroughly to enjoy my little existence, I have, if I may say so, awakened all the stages of my life: my laughing childhood, when I played and was strong and well; then the dawn of reflection and feeling, my first sorrows as a youth, the glimmering which I had of the full healthy man's life, and at the same time the renunciation which is usually only a habit with quite old men. Do you not think that one who can awake so fully the feeling of his existence at any moment, whenever he wishes, to whom *everything* is a help, joy and sorrow, loss and gain, because everything shows him his own being on another side—do you not think that such a happy fellow can only consider it empty talk when even philosophers say: It would be better not to be born? That indeed times may come in which pain stifles the pure realization of existence, and awakens a longing for sheer unconsciousness, who can deny? But the severest pain is often only an enhancing of our existence; otherwise it would be impossible to explain the triumphant joy which martyrs have experienced in fire and torture. They felt that their sufferings, which were intended to destroy them, were only a confirmation of the existence and strength of their own souls, which were full either of a

dream or of the truth. The worst that could be done to them only served to enhance the enjoyment of their own personality. And so all that is tragic in life, which a shallow philosophy would count among the miseries of the world, is merely another higher way, peculiar to noble natures, of enjoying life; and when death does at last come, he is only like sleep after a holiday, in the ecstasy of which one has danced long enough to have had enough of it, and to have no more strength for new joys."

He was silent for a moment, gazing before him with an air of cheerful thoughtfulness. Suddenly he said:

"When my holiday is at end, Franzel, you must stick to Edwin."

"What stuff you are talking!" exclaimed the other, startled. "You have never been in a better way than now. It was a crisis; Marquard told me so himself."

"Yes, it was a crisis," smiled the invalid. "A sentence is being considered, nay, has been passed. Life has been criticizing this not very durable frame, and has written its failings in red ink on the margin. Do you think that Marquard does not know as well as I do that the game is played out? One more mental excitement, one more imprudence——"

"Balder! what are you saying? No, these are fancies, perhaps a passing weakness."

"Because I can talk so calmly of the end? You ought to have known long ago that that is my strength. I know that few will rise willingly from the table just when things are tasting the best. And truly, Franzel, life has never seemed so beautiful to me as it does now. What true friendship, how much beautiful poetry, how many deep, high thoughts I have enjoyed these last few weeks! But that is of no use; one must live and let live; there are many others ready for their turn. No, Franzel, if it upsets you, I must wait for another opportunity to tell you of my last wish, though I do not really know how long I may

have. Come, be reasonable. Do you see, I have always cared about you; after Edwin, I love you best. I need not exactly take leave of my brother. My whole life these last years has been nothing but a long farewell. We knew that we should not keep one another, I at least knew it very well; so we were all the more eager to enjoy the possession of one another in part payment. But when it really comes I know how it will be: he will not be at all reconciled to it at first, and therefore I wanted to beg you to stay with him. He needs a great deal, and not many can give it to him."

"Do you think it necessary to ask that?" cried his friend with emotion, which he struggled in vain to conceal. "For heaven's sake, Balder, what are you talking about? You—you seriously think—and I—and we——"

He had sprung up, and as if desperate, ran round the little table in the middle of the room with such violence that each leaf on the palm-tree trembled.

"You hardly know yet the full meaning of what I would say," continued the sick boy, calmly. "Of course you will always be his friend, I know that; but if you wish to ease my mind altogether, you must sacrifice something for him."

"As if I—don't you know me better than that?"

"I know you to be the most unselfish man under the sun," said Balder with a smile; "and it is just that very habit of yours of never thinking of yourself which you must give up, both for his sake and mine, at least so far as you can without being untrue to yourself. Do you know what will come of it if you go on as you have done? In two years—in spite of all your friendship—you will not be able to set foot in the 'tub.'"

"I? But tell me——?"

"Why, you will be thinking of your friends either in a fortress or in America. Dear Franzel, shall I tell

you why you do not like living?—because you are of the opinion that one only does really live when one becomes a martyr for one's convictions. I have always loved you for this, but all the same, I think you are mistaken. Just try it, and say to yourself that to many your life would be far more useful than your martyrdom, and you will see that it is possible to maintain one's post with courage and self-sacrifice without being foolhardy enough to attract the attention of the enemy by alarm signals. It would be an unspeakable comfort to me if you would give up all 'agitation' just for two years, so that you might see first what the real state of things is. There are currents in which it is only useless waste of strength to row, because the boat floats onward of itself. I know what it costs you; but if you would grant the last wish——”

“Say no more!” cried the other, standing suddenly still before his friend, with his streaming eyes turned towards him. “Balder, is it possible you—we are not to keep you with us? And you think that if that were to happen I could go on with my life as if *nothing* had happened? When you no longer see the sun, do you think I could—I should——”

Words failed him; he turned away again, and remained motionless by the turning lathe.

“Neither *do* I mean that you should go on with your life as you have done,” said Balder, in a soft voice. “You will need compensation for what you give up. You must learn to *like* life, and I think I know how you will learn it most quickly. You must take a wife, Franzel!”

“I? What are you thinking of? How can such things occur to you—and just now too——”

“Because it will soon be too late to earn a *Küppel-pelz** through you,” said the youth, smiling to himself. “In any case I shall hardly need it; I cannot be

* A reward in the shape of a fur coat given to one who has brought about a match.

very cold where I shall soon be lying. But I should like to know that you were warm and well taken care of; and I know by experience—for you see I have been as it were married to Edwin—that the world looks far more cheerful when one looks at it with two pair of eyes than with one. Do you see,” he continued, as his friend still remained motionless, and seemingly occupied with boring a hole in the carpenter’s bench with a file, “Edwin also will find a wife who will make him happy, and then there will be nothing left for you to press to your heart but humanity; and though that may be very fine and noble, it is not all that you need, and you will begin to excite yourself again, and to fill your head with thoughts of martyrdom. You must have a little wife who will love you, and will know your worth, and by her mere existence she will preach to you every day what Edwin has so often in vain represented to you—that you should keep yourself for the future, and not sacrifice yourself without necessity and before the time. I have no fear that domestic comfort would make you unfaithful to your convictions. And then, how can a social politician, whose only knowledge of the family, the foundation of everything, is from hearsay—who does not know where the shoe pinches the householder—how can he speak to married men of their responsibilities?”

These words brought a look of charming craftiness into the eyes of the invalid. Perhaps he feared that Franzelius might turn to him, and see through his secret intention of attacking him on his weakest side. He rose, and limping to the stove, put a little wood on the fire. At the same time he continued, with apparent imperturbability—

“You must not think that I am saying all this without purpose. No, my dear friend; I have somebody in my eye for you—a girl who suits you so exactly that I might have invented or ordered her on purpose for you. Young, and very pretty, a heart of gold, fond

of work, and also fond of life—just the very thing for some one who does not like living; and no princess, but a child of working people. Can't you guess yet? Well, I must help you: her name first is Reginchen."

"Balder, you are dreaming! No, no; I would not for the world; say no more about it. Besides, you have talked too long——"

"Well, at all events," replied the youth, rising again, and limping slowly to his bed, "it would do no harm if you were a little easier of comprehension, and would meet me half way. Where have your eyes been that you have not seen the favour with which this charming girl has looked upon you for a long time past? I—I have observed it! This little maiden, Franzel, is a treasure, let me tell you. I have known her all these years, I have grown to love her like a sister, and the man whom I should think good enough for her must be as dear to me as a brother. Therefore I have wished to open your eyes, blind old dreamer that you are, so that I may be able to shut mine in peace. Of course I do not know whether you may not have given your heart in another quarter, and that my hint may not come too late. At any rate you owe it to the girl to do what you mean to do soon. She seems to have taken to heart your keeping away from her so long. Her mother says that she is not at all the thing yet, that she eats and sleeps very little. I should like to see my little sister well and happy again before I——"

He could not finish the sentence. As he sat on the bed he had laid his head on the pillow, and had closed his eyes as if tired with so much speaking. Suddenly he felt his hands seized; Franzelius had wanted to embrace him, but had fallen by the bed, and now lay with his head pressed against Balder's knee in such a violent fit of uncontrollable emotion, that the latter had great trouble to bring him to himself with soothing words.

At last he stood up. He wanted to say something, but his voice failed him.

"You—you are— Oh, God! forgive, forgive me—I am not worthy of it!" was all that he could stammer out. Then he tore himself away and rushed out of the room.

Balder had sunk back on the bed, and had again closed his eyes. His pale face was as if transfigured, he rested as a man might do after a great victory, and at that moment he did not even feel the pain in his chest. Everything was quite still in the room, the sunshine played with the branches of the palm-tree, a faint red gleam from the door of the stove fell on the cast of the young slave, who seemed actually to breathe and to whisper to his fellow-sufferer lying on the poor couch—"Only die; it does not hurt!" But a sudden thought disturbed Balder from this foretaste of eternal peace. He rose and dragged himself to the lathe, the drawer of which he opened with a hand which slightly trembled.

"How fortunate that I thought of it!" he said. "If they had found that!"

Now he took out the portfolio in which he kept his verses. How many of them contained the image of the maiden he had secretly loved, drawn with the flattering pencil of solitary yearning; how many of these simple sheets were gilded by his imaginary happiness! And yet he could pass them through his hand without bitterness. All that he had then felt had been a blessed comfort to him. What had happened that could spoil the brightness and fragrance of this spring-time of his heart? He should have no summer; but did that make his season of buds and blossoms the less beautiful? He read a verse here and there to himself in a half-audible voice, altered a word here and there which no longer satisfied him, and could not help smiling at his taking the trouble to polish verses which no human eye had seen nor should ever

see. He had quite forgotten a great deal, and was himself struck with the beauty and point of the expressions. When he had turned over the last sheet he took the pencil and wrote, without altering a syllable, the following verses on a loose scrap of paper, which he then laid in the drawer instead of the whole packet—

Bright and lovely world, good night !
Joyous days have blest my life, now waning,
And in silence uncomplaining,
I close tired eyes on day's soft light.

All that earth most pure and fair contains,
Could my ev'ry pulse awaken,
Quickly beat my heart to joys or pains,
But in sorrow never was forsaken.

From my eyes and from my soul
Fell the blinding veil of madness,
And ever with a gathering gladness
I strove to life's bright summit as my goal ;

Where no "Idol-shapes" hold sway,
Where the dignity of living
In the light of Truth's pure day,
Love of man to man is giving.

From the mountain height, 'mid azure glory,
I behold this promised land
In its loveliness before me,
Known but to the bravest pilgrim band.

Children of this world, who grope
Through the darkness blindly, sadly ;
With the dawn of Love and Hope
Shall this land inherit gladly.

Let me, when my life shall cease,
Breathe on *them* my dying blessing,
Who in hopes like mine progressing
Still shall dream of earthly love and peace ?

Oh ! my brother, if indeed I might
Be with thee still—but away with sorrow,
And be thine the path I fain would follow.
Bright and lovely world, good night !

CHAPTER XII.

EDWIN'S step sounded outside on the stairs. When he entered he found Balder sitting before the stove, holding the poker in the clear flame.

"Good morning, child," he said, with a face which was more cheerful than usual. "What are you about? Where is Franzel? Have you been burning paper?"

"I have been making up the fire," said his brother, stooping down into the glow to conceal his blushes. "It was beginning to get chilly. Franzel went away not long ago; he is probably with his betrothed."

"Our Tribune engaged to be married? the conspirator, conspiring against himself! And to whom, may I ask?"

"You were quite right, Edwin, in thinking that something had happened to Reginchen. But so far it is a secret. I am very glad about it; I think they suit one another."

"Well, children must turn into grown-up people. To think of our woman-hating philanthropist and the little house swallow! This is news indeed. Well, I have also a bit of news for you. Just as I was entering the house the postman stopped me, and gave me an epistle which is worth at least fifty ducats to you and me. We have won the prize!"

"Your essay! Oh, that is a good thing!"

"A good thing! Is that all you say? Your brotherly love seems to take this wonder very phlegmatically!"

"Because it seems to me perfectly natural that you should at last be recognized. Why, I never doubted about it."

"Yes, yes, my boy," laughed Edwin, stroking his brother's thick hair lovingly. "If you were to read to-morrow in the newspaper that a certain Dr. Edwin had been elected great Mogul, or, what would be still more fabulous, minister of education, you would lay aside the sheet and say, with your well-known blindness, 'Well, I only wonder that they were not wise enough to do this long ago.' Well then, you man of the *nil admirari* species, I may bring out my second piece of news without fear of exciting you too much: the faculty which has been wise enough to crown my work has conceived such extraordinary partiality for me that, in spite of my radical tendencies, they offer me a professorship. Of course for the present this must be private. They have to contend with all sorts of contrary currents, and must tack in order to get me through. But they believe that were I to go and show myself, certain superstitious fellows who look upon me as a son of the devil would see that the devil is not so black as he is painted. So I am to go, to see, and to conquer, and that soon, for the professorship has been vacant since Easter, and they would like to see *collegium logicum* provided for for this next winter half-year. The conditions are not bad; at all events a piece of bread, though perhaps at first without butter. Well, though nothing can come of it, it is anyhow a sign that light must conquer darkness, and 'that the day of the righteous'—of your worthy brother in particular—'does come at last.'"

"Nothing come of it? But pray, Edwin——"

"Well, my boy, it is clear enough that nothing can

come of it. How could we strike our tents in the winter, and wander fifty miles to the south, when your lung is barely healed, and without even knowing whether the climate there would suit you. Yes, if the 'tub' could be packed up just as it is, and sent off as luggage, with a glass painted on it, and the words 'With Care—?'”

They were silent for a while. Balder held the letter of the Faculty in his hand, and seemed to be reading it over and over again. The prize essay was spoken of in terms of the greatest respect, its particular merits were discussed; then in a private letter the dean laid great stress on their wish of securing to the university such promising talents.

Edwin had gone to his desk, and began to mend a pen.

“Are you still poring over the letter, Balder?” he said, carelessly; “they write a good style in that part of the country, don't they? Well, we also will do our best.”

“Does she know about it yet?” asked Balder, without looking up.

“She? What are you thinking of? I have not seen her for the last fortnight; and besides, how should it interest her? The next time I go and call will be quite soon enough for her to hear it, and even then she will feel no curiosity about the prize essay, a duchess like that!”

Balder rose quietly, laid the letter on the table, and said, “You will not vex me, Edwin, by saying ‘no’ for my sake! Don't you see that if it must be, I could remain on through the winter here, and could follow you when it began to get warm. You know how well I am taken care of here, and I am really quite well again. But the most important thing is to speak first to her; now there is nothing in the way.”

“Child,” cried Edwin, throwing away his pen, “do you wish to drive me mad? Talking of things as

possible which— But it is folly to talk about it seriously. Come, we will have dinner; I hear it coming up the stairs; and since I have known that we are worth fifty ducats I am as hungry as a millionaire—but no, they are never hungry—as hungry then as a man who has never in all his life seen fifty ducats at once.”

The door opened, but instead of the maid bringing the dinner, little Jean entered; his round childish face with the staring blue eyes was funnily muffled in the high collar of a thick pilot cloth coat, his hair most ambitiously curled in front, his cheeks as red as Borsdorf* apples with the sharp east wind. He had a twist of paper in his hand, out of which he undid a bunch of violets. “I was to give that to the sick gentleman,” he said, in his prim falsetto, “and my mistress bade me inquire how he was.”

Balder took the flowers out of his hand. “Say that I am all right again, and that my brother will come himself this afternoon to take my thanks for the beautiful flowers; and look here”—he put his hand into his pocket and pulled out the last thaler which he possessed—“you have had to climb up these steep stairs so often——”

The boy went a step backwards. “My mistress has strictly forbidden me,” he said; “I must not take anything.”

“You may say that we have won the great prize, do you hear?” said Balder, smiling, as he pushed the thaler into the pocket of Jean’s pilot coat. “And now go and give our respects to your mistress, and this afternoon—do you understand?”

The boy nodded gravely, as he always did, and left the room with a respectful bow.

“What have you done?” cried Edwin as soon as they were alone. “Will you force me to offer my head, or at all events my heart, to the knife? Do you

* A place in Saxony celebrated for little round red-cheeked apples.

think that she would feel any particular attraction to being called Frau Professorin ? ”

“Put these flowers in water, Edwin, and let them stand on your desk. They are not meant for me. As for the rest, we shall see in the afternoon, for here really is the dinner, and all the news which this morning has brought has made me hungry too. How is Reginchen to-day, Lore ? ”

“She seems rather better,” said the faithful old woman (who had been many years in the house), with a mysterious grin. “At least I saw Herr Franzelius go to her about an hour ago, and he is still there, and has had dinner with them, and Reginchen cried at first, and then laughed, so that her illness cannot be very dangerous. Good Lord, and I have carried her in my arms ! ”

CHAPTER XIII.

WHEN Edwin entered Toinette's room that afternoon he found her sitting on the sofa, with her thoughts evidently far away, for only when he called her by name did she look up. A little box stood on the table before her, and she was dreamily turning the key backwards and forwards in the lock. Her face was pale, and there was a strange look of anxiety in her eyes. She let them rest for a few moments on her visitor, as if she had difficulty in recognizing him. It was, however, only that she had to make a great effort to turn her thoughts from her inward preoccupation to things outside of herself.

"How do you do, my dear friend?" she said quietly, without rising, as she gave him her hand. "So here you are at last! I *am* glad, and all the more so as you can come with an easy mind. What terrible weeks these have been for you! Indeed I have also been *very* miserable, and the worst is that no good nursing and brotherly love can help me. But let us talk of something else, of something more cheerful. So you have won the great prize! I congratulate you."

He laughingly explained what had led Balder to make this jest with little Jean, but he did not say one word of the professorship.

"Well," said she, "it is of course better to have

won in a lottery, where one needs more skill than chance to avoid drawing a blank, and yet it is almost a pity that it was only a joke. It was a consolation to me for not being able to keep my word to you."

"Your word!"

"To offer you the fragments of my princely fortune in order that your brother might travel to the south. Though I have since lived very modestly, only look, that is all I have! When I have paid my last house-keeping accounts there will be just enough over for a dose of opium."

She had opened the little box to let him see into it. It contained a couple of gold pieces, and a few bright thalers.

"I am glad that you have now so much room," he said, jestingly, "otherwise I really do not know where I should have kept my fifty ducats. For such magnificence in our poor hovel—even you have now made acquaintance with the 'tub'—we have not as yet provided ourselves with a fire-proof safe."

"Laugh away," she answered, as she shut the box again. "It vexes me very much that just before you came I should have been foolish and weak enough to weep over my bankruptcy. The stupid money was really not worth it. But that is the very reason, don't you see, why a great prize would be really a very fine thing, because it would enable one to avoid the degradation of thinking and troubling oneself about money. I am ashamed of having been so vulgar even for a minute. And now not a word more on the subject. Tell me all about your brother. Is he really quite out of danger?"

He seated himself by her on the sofa, and spoke of Balder's state—of the hopes which Marquard had given, of the great love of all his friends for him, and how he had made him (Edwin) promise faithfully to thank Toinette for all her kindness. "Of course I also thank you in my *own* name, my dear friend," he

added. "I cannot help fancying that you meant to please me too. You knew what I was suffering during this time, and that nothing could inspire me with more courage and hope than your sympathy. Will you believe it, that in the midst of all my anxiety about this dear fellow I still had time to miss you most horribly? If, therefore, you had remained apart from us in utter coldness of heart, then indeed I should have reproached myself for having half deserted my brother for some one to whom he was quite indifferent."

She answered nothing. Indeed it seemed as if she heard only half of what he was saying, and as if she were occupied with some thought quite apart from him or his presence.

"You are happy," she said, after some time. "You have some one to make you glad and sorry. I—but who do you think I have seen again since you were here? The count."

Edwin sprang to his feet; he had turned suddenly pale. After a long pause he said, in a tone which it was a painful effort to render indifferent, "The Count! in spite of the unmistakable hint which you gave him by your sudden change of abode——"

"Oh, if you only knew him! Such a foolish man as he is not so easily discouraged. And at all events I owe him some thanks for having amused me, while you left me to be melancholy alone."

"He has—you have received him here, allowed him to visit you more than once?"

"Why not? If you were to see him you would understand that nothing could be less dangerous than such an adorer. You know me to be far from inflammable, and I am sure I might be in the company of such a lover for a hundred years, and my heart would never beat one bit more quickly. At first, it is true, after he had found me out, God knows how, he came in here unannounced, and I was very angry at his intruding, and

received him so ill that he remained standing there at the door like a poor sinner, without being able to utter a syllable to excuse himself. I said things to him which no other would have borne quietly. But he—at first he seemed quite dumbfounded, then suddenly I found him at my feet; he could say nothing except that he was a lost man if I did not take pity on him. He had done everything he could to prove to me how much in earnest he was. He had wrung from his mother, who was very proud, her consent to my becoming her daughter-in-law. He had had a hard time of it with his haughty relations; and now that he had succeeded in getting rid of every obstacle, I thrust him away, and wished to deprive him of every hope at once and for ever! And then he remained at my feet, pouring out oaths and protestations, so that I really hardly knew whether to laugh or to be sorry.”

“Toinette! and you gave him hope——”

“I? How little you know me! When it had gone on for some time I lost all wish either to laugh or to pity him, and I explained to him very drily, but most decidedly, that I did not feel the slightest desire of becoming his wife. If it made him unhappy I was very sorry, but I felt no obligation to make the first excited man who chanced to present himself happy at the expense of my whole life. And this, I said, was my first and last word.”

“And yet he had the face to go on troubling you? And you were complaisant enough——”

“Unfortunately, my friend, I have a much kinder heart than you would think. When he came again for the first time after this, as I thought, most final dismissal, you yourself would have laughed at the contrite, crushed mien with which he sneaked into the room behind little Jean. I only received him into favour on condition that there should be no more question of adoration, love, or marriage between us. Besides, why should I as *ci-devant* duchess grudge

myself the pleasure of having a count for my court fool? I was so lonely, so dull, and, as I said, you could not imagine anything funnier than his face and manner. As for a face though, he hardly possesses one. When he is no longer there it is impossible to remember what he is like; he has just the kind of features which one sees in gentlemen's fashion books—a nose going down, a mouth going across, and a little beard such as Heaven causes to grow on thousands of young noble faces. But now imagine this very ordinary face beautified by a constant frown of sorrow, or rather with the *attempt* to look as if its owner were dying of a broken heart, and you must agree that no more comical contrast could be found. I ill-use him as much as I can, I say the most impertinent things to him; I have never once allowed him so much as to kiss the tip of my slipper, and yet I cannot rouse him from his intense devotion and adoration. I should not be the daughter of a poor ballet master, and, besides, a vain, idle, almost desperate thing, if such a noble slave did not amuse me."

"And how long do you intend amusing yourself in this edifying manner?" inquired Edwin, with some irritation.

Instead of answering, she opened the table drawer and took out of it several large photographs. "They are views of his castle," said she. "This one shows it standing on a height above the woods; here is the court of the castle, where the grand equipage is standing, and the horse for the young count. I call him young, though it never enters one's head to think whether he is young or old. Do you think that an individual like him ever gets really older?—And here are three pictures of the interior: the dining-room, the conservatory, and the boudoir for the young countess. One cannot deny that he, or at any rate his upholsterer, has taste. But the master of the house is hardly a desirable addition to all this magnificence.

I told him so to his face; he only answered with a sigh."

"And how long is it to go on like this?" said Edwin, repeating his question.

She threw the photographs back into the box, and rose from the sofa. "You are a regular dog in the manger," she said, "to wish to spoil this innocent enjoyment which I have found in the evening of my life. Have you not looked into my money-box? Till the last thaler is spent I will not pass my days in sadness."

"And then?"

"Then! I think we are agreed that one is not wanted in the world when one can neither be useful nor pleasant to oneself or to any one else."

"And you have arrived at this point?"

"Very nearly. True, I should not only make my count happy, as he says, if I were to put my life into his hands, but should really make him alive for the first time. But tell me what sort of a life that would be for us both. Sudden, unmistakable suicide would be preferable to that. And for whom should I, ought I to live? You indeed—I believe you to be a really honest, sincere friend to me; but have you not been able to get on very well without me these last few weeks? And would you be able to go on enjoying the little pleasure which my existence is to you if you saw that I was only dragging on a miserable life, under a load of deprivations and petty cares which were destroying my whole being, and which would at last ruin me altogether?"

She had grown more and more excited as she spoke, and had begun to walk about the room in extreme disquiet. It had become dark. Little Jean knocked and inquired whether his mistress wished for the lamp.

"No," she answered shortly. The boy withdrew noiselessly.

"Toinette," said Edwin, "will you listen to me five minutes without interrupting me?"

"Say on. I prefer listening to talking. When my thoughts become words they sound so curious that they make me shiver. Do begin, please begin!"

"You have arrived at a point where you can neither stand still nor advance, that is to say, in the direction in which you have started. There remains apparently but one choice for you, to throw yourself headlong down the precipice. But despair alone can venture on such a step, and as yet you have no right to despair. Could you not first make an attempt to turn round and to make a fresh start, just to see how far you would get in quite a new direction? You believe me to be your sincere friend, and indeed I feel that I am; but supposing that despite all my sincerity I do not think only of you, but also a little of myself—supposing that I should venture to be something more than a friend to you? Do not be frightened; I know that were I to speak of the deep, unconquerable, and always increasing passion which has mastered me ever since our first meeting, I should talk a language which you would not understand. I hope you will do me the credit to allow that till to-day I have never troubled you with it. I do not grudge the count the part that he plays towards you; but it would be equally foolish to wish to hide something which really does exist, and which in a solemn moment like this wishes to assert its right to exist. I know enough of your life to console myself with the thought that no man is more to you than I am. But is it nothing but folly to hope to be in time even more to you than I am now? Is it madness to hope that you might perhaps find life worth living if you were to share it with me, if you were to belong to me, and were to find your happiness in mine? Dear Toinette, I do not wish to boast, but every one whom I have ever loved will bear witness that I am to be depended on. Besides, you know me,

and ever since I knew you I have gone my own way, have never smartened up either my mind or my manners to go into your company. I am not brilliant, I have no lover's bribes to offer. If I did not know that in spite of the love of splendour by which you are as it were possessed, your heart is thoroughly incorruptible, simple, and true, I should not be fool enough to offer myself to you. But as it is I venture to do so. Everything that I possess belonged to you from the very first hour, and I really think you may be satisfied, even though your expectations are not humble. I myself have only learnt by experience what an inexhaustible power of loving I possess—enough for the most insatiable heart. And so I need not speak to you as if I were a beggar; I can richly outweigh all that you have to give, even if a miracle were to take place, and your heart were at last to wake up to me; even if, in addition to all that nature has bestowed on you, you were to receive what is better than it all—the power of loving.

“Now I have really startled you,” he continued after a pause, as she sat motionless at some distance from him, on a chair near the door, gazing fixedly before her into the darkness. “Indeed I have startled myself, though for months I have been saying that such an hour must come some day. But in spite of your own position and your affair with the count, which, by the bye, does not amuse me as much as it does you, I hardly think that I should have said all this to-day, I should only have gone on acting the part of your sincere friend, if something had not happened just to-day which has loosened my tongue. A professorship has been offered to me. It is not only that I should have to go away and leave you here, but it is also a question of securing my own future. You know well that I have no ducal proclivities; you have made acquaintance with our ‘tub,’ and will understand that any one who has clambered up our stairs

so long without complaint can hardly look upon it as a necessity of life to drive in his own carriage through miles of wood to an hereditary castle. I should never have thought of proposing that you should climb up to your heaven upon earth by such a rickety Jacob's ladder. But now everything is changed, and though not grand, will be quite bearable. My brother too, who will of course be the third in the alliance——"

At this moment Jean entered and announced the count.

Toinette seemed not to have heard. Only when the boy repeated his words she said, "I cannot see him. Tell him I am not well."

Jean went away, and outside in the hall they heard a voice in vehement discussion with him, then a door bang, and immediately afterwards a carriage drive away from the door.

Silence had again fallen on the room above. Toinette had continued to sit on the chair by the wall, and Edwin on the sofa. Now he rose, but remained standing by the table, and appeared to be seeking for words which might soften her heart and unseal her lips.

"I know why you are silent, Toinette," he said at last. "You are too honest to raise hopes for yourself or for me in which you do not believe. Till now you have liked me because I appeared to claim nothing; now I have confessed to you that I will have *all or nothing*, and suddenly I have grown quite strange to you, a troublesome suitor against whom you must be on your guard. Oh, Toinette, I feel what I have staked and perhaps lost! But I could not help it, I owed it to you—and to myself; for the life which I have been leading with you would have ended by wearing me out, and the sacrifice would not have benefited you. You are not vain or selfish enough for that. How is it that you are not, Toinette? Why are you this wonderful, enigmatical being, tortured by your own impossibility of loving? If you were a

coquette, one who finds compensation for all deeper happiness, such as shallow natures cannot know, in her triumphs over men's hearts, I should be almost grateful to you; it would be easier for me to go and to have done with you. But as it is, send me away, say no more to me; I know very well what your silence means, and that nothing I can say can awaken in you that which nature has denied to you."

He made a movement as if about to go, but his feet refused to do their duty; he only made a few steps to the window, and there he stood holding with both his hands to the handle of the window, and pressing his forehead against the pane. Then he heard her beginning to speak in a soft, almost timid voice.

"Are you angry with me, my dear friend, for having sat here like a stone listening to all that you have said, to all your good kind words, which I do not deserve, for which indeed I cannot thank you as I ought? For you cannot think how sorry it makes me that you are so good to me, while I—I only remain as I am. Oh, you are right, it is torture to myself that I cannot be different. I feel as if there were a spell on me. I have read of one who seemed to be dead, and who yet heard all those who surrounded her giving way to their sorrow and their love, while she had no power to move; she could not put out her hand to her friends and say, I am alive, I love you and will stay with you; and so it is with me. Nothing has ever given me so much pain before as the thought that you wish to leave me because you will have all or nothing. And yet I should feel as if I were doing you a wrong if I were to hold you back. I should expect any other to be satisfied with me as I am, with what I can give, whether it be little or much. But you—you ought to have *all*, all that you could wish or need; you are worthy of something better than to have to drag such a miserable creature as I am through life. Indeed, my dear friend, if I were not quite

certain that you would regret it, that I *could* only make you unhappy and ruin myself, believe me I would not hesitate for my own sake, even if I were to be miserable, but could see you happy. I have grown to care so much for you that I would gladly forget myself if I could only help you. But we must not deceive ourselves; it is impossible. You would never endure happiness at the expense of another." Then, after a pause: "And yet you are quite right: we could not always have been silent about this. But it is unspeakably sad that it should have come thus. Is there really nothing to be done? Supposing we do separate now, is there no hope of our meeting again in life—if indeed I have a life before me—of our again shaking hands like two good old friends? must this be the end, quite the end?"

He turned round, and trembled secretly to see that she had risen, and had softly approached him. She looked at him through the twilight with a face of touching sadness; she stood like a child asking for forgiveness, with her arms hanging down, and her head so low that her hair fell over her temples.

"Edwin!" she said softly, lifting her hand a little and raising her eyes to him. His heart burned with pain and love. "Oh, Toinette!" he cried. "Good-bye! good-bye! Not one word more; everything is said, the sentence has been pronounced." She stretched her arms towards him as if in pain; for one moment he held her to his breast, his mouth pressed to her soft hair, he felt her breath on his neck, then he tore himself away and rushed out of the room as if he did not know what he was about.

CHAPTER XIV.

As chance would have it, on the very same day and almost at the very same hour another of our friends was laying his fate for weal or woe at the feet of a woman, and his sentence was no happier than Edwin's had been, indeed the fatal decree by which he was rejected was even more enigmatical.

It happened in this manner :—Mohr had gone to-day as usual to the little house on the lagoon to inquire after Christiane, whom since that terrible night he had not seen again; indeed she had been seen neither by him nor by any other man, for she had refused with great decision to admit even Marquard, who had saved her life. She sat in the little room behind the kitchen, which the maid had given up to her; the only little window was barred, and looked on the canal and the dead wall. There she had bolted herself in, and only opened when Lea knocked; but she made no response to the girl's kindness, and for some days sat like a statue on the straw chair by the window, with her eyes always fixed on the dark water below. It was as if she thought herself in a self-chosen prison, and divided from the world for the rest of her life. She touched none of the food which was brought to her, except a little soup and bread, and the only thing she had said had been a request on the third day for

some work. Since that time she had sewed from morning till night, always sitting in the same place ; she had mended linen and hemmed cloths, and to all the girl's prayers and questions had only returned a pressure of the hand or a gloomy shake of the head. To-day again the same hopeless account. In the night Lea had crept into the kitchen and had listened at the door of the little room. She had heard the poor thing walking restlessly backwards and forwards, perhaps to warm herself, for the night was cold, and she had not suffered a fire to be lighted in the tiny stove. Sometimes she had groaned, as if in unspeakable misery, which she strove in vain to force back into her heart. It was long after midnight before she had gone to rest.

"What is to become of her if God in His mercy does not perform a miracle, and illuminate her poor dark soul with a ray of His love and grace ?" cried the little painter, with a deep sigh. "Oh, my child, don't you see now how right I am, that all earthly paths only lead into darkness and mistakes, if we will not make a humble effort to grasp the hand of God, which will hold us up ? This poor lost life ! God forgive me, but I almost feel as if the doctor were right. Who can know whether it was for her good that we gave ourselves so much trouble to wake her up ?"

Lea was standing at her work-table, her pale face turned towards the floor. She said nothing ; her heart was so heavy with her own and other people's sorrow, that if it had not been for her father she also would have wished herself out of the world.

"My friends," said Mohr, rising from the chair on which he had been sitting brooding for some time, as he blew thick clouds of smoke from his cigarette, "it is my opinion that something must at last be done. We have given God's mercy sufficient time to perform a miracle in case it should have pleased Him to do so. Perhaps He is waiting to see whether we shall not first

make a move, and whether we may not attack the difficulty with our small human power, and as a tolerably hardened heathen—no offence, Herr König—I at all events am resolved to make the attempt.”

“What will you do?” inquired Lea, looking up with a startled glance.

Mohr drew up his herculean form, as he was in the habit of doing when after long thought he had arrived at a determination, with his nervous arms he almost touched the ceiling, then he buried his hands in his curly hair, and said, half closing his eyes and with a curl of his lip—

“This Marquard may understand his trade well enough as far as the physical side is concerned. But the rubbing of limbs is not everything. There is also the soul, which has been just as much benumbed as the body, and which we must seek to warm by spiritual friction and all sorts of moral mustard plasters; otherwise a desperate human soul such as this is will go on freezing to death, while the body may be cheerfully rejoicing in renewed circulation of the blood. I will go in to her and will make an attempt to reanimate this torpid soul; we ought to have tried long ago.”

“She will not let you in,” said Lea, shaking her head, “and even if she did, have I not said everything that I could think of——”

“Of course you have, my dear young lady; but don’t you see, you have taken hold of her with gloves, while I—hem!—I will try quite another method. The devil—no offence, Herr König—the arch-enemy, if he exists, would indeed have reason to laugh in his sleeve if we were to be faint-hearted enough to let this poor soul fall back into his clutches, from which we have just torn it with so much difficulty. Here it is a question of force against force, with a little cunning to begin with. If you will first knock, Fräulein Lea, and say that you wish to go in, and then allow me to take precedence of you, such an innocent

stratagem will not be imputed to you as sin at the last day."

"I am afraid it will be in vain," replied Lea, "even if it does not do harm. I, at all events—but perhaps I do not quite understand it all."

She went out, and Mohr followed her on tip-toe, affecting an awkward gaiety, as if it were a question of some amusing prank. All the same his hands trembled as he passed them through his hair.

When Lea knocked, they heard a very faint voice say, "Who is there?"

"I, dear Christiane," answered the girl; "I wanted to know whether you would allow—here is——"

At the same moment the bolt was withdrawn, and without further delay Mohr stepped past Lea through the half-opened door.

"Here is some one," said he, taking up Lea's sentence, "who would like to inquire after Fräulein Christiane's welfare. Forgive an old friend for refusing to go on for ever being dismissed from behind bolts and bars. By Jove, Fräulein, you have not chosen the most cheerful of abodes for yourself! This gloomy cage is the very place to make one melancholy."

She did not speak one word. At Mohr's entrance, who had immediately closed the door behind him, she had given a violent start, and had taken refuge by the chair near the barred window. There she stood immovable, with her arms firmly crossed over her breast, with her eyes fixed on the ground, so that she almost looked as if she were asleep. His jesting tone died on his lips as he remarked the deadly pallor of her face, and the expression of hopeless sorrow in her mouth and eyes.

When he approached still nearer, and sought to take her hand, she pressed herself still more closely against the wall, and sank down upon the chair, while her averted head and a shuddering of the whole body

seemed to forbid his coming nearer. An unspeakable compassion thrilled through him.

"Fräulein Christiane," said he, as soon as he had recovered somewhat from the shock of seeing her again, "my visit is disagreeable to you; I am really very, very sorry, but my reasons for intruding are far too serious to allow me to take my leave at once, as a well-bred man would usually do in such a case. The more quietly you listen to me, the sooner you will get rid of me. *Will you listen to me?*"

He waited a long time, and could hear her painful breathing.

"No," at last broke from her half-closed lips. "Go—leave me—I have nothing to hear nor to say."

"Allow me to doubt that," he continued, with apparent calmness. "You are ill. The wisest invalids do not always know what is good for them, they are to a certain extent unaccountable. Whether you have anything to say to me I do not know, but I at all events have several things to say to you, and at once without circumlocution. I know that you are angry with me for having hindered you from carrying out your purpose of turning your back upon this world, which for unknown reasons is displeasing to you. Do you know why I ventured to take this liberty? Not at all from motives of general philanthropy. I should take good care not to pull back by the coat-tail the first individual whom I might happen to see springing into the abyss. No, dear Fräulein, what I did for you was merely the result of common selfishness; for I must confess that this world without you would lose most of its charm for me—it would be something like a quartet without its first violin. Forgive the comparison, which is far from witty. But when I see with what disfavour you turn from me, I must be satisfied with having at all events an opportunity of stammering out my sentences, which are without any pretensions to style."

Still she remained silent, with her forehead pressed against the bare wall, her hands now convulsively clasped together.

"I do not know what you have thought of me hitherto," he continued in a suppressed voice, leaning against the bed-post, and secretly wiping his brow, though it was very cold in the room. "Perhaps you may not have had such a bad opinion of me as I have had of myself, for I have been vain enough to do my best to turn my brightest side towards you. But there is one thing about me which you do not know: as a man I may be thoroughly useless, a thoroughly superfluous, bungling individual, but as a *poodle* I am quite excellent. The few people whom I do care about can never get rid of me, let them do what they will, whether they like it or whether they don't. So I may as well tell you that it will be of no use to repulse me, or to treat me badly, or even indeed to jump into the water again in order to get away from me; the poodle will only jump in after you and bring you out, even if he had to use his teeth to do it. I know very well that if you were now to honour me with a word you would ask me by what right I have thus forced myself upon you, what I have to do with you, why thus uninvited I trouble you with my poodle qualities. Dear Fräulein, I might answer that I don't know myself, no more than if I were really a poodle, that it is sheer instinct. But perhaps I have a better answer: the trouble of my life is, my dear friend, that I can only do things by halves. Now it vexes me horribly that even on this occasion it seems I shall only half succeed in saving your life, and so I want to see whether I cannot really achieve my purpose if I devote myself altogether with might and main, with all my head and all my heart, and with my abundant portion of obstinacy, to the task. Dear Christiane, do not be offended at my not very refined way of expressing myself. It does not prevent my being, as you may

well believe, in thorough serious earnest. Do you know what I said to the brothers in the 'tub' when I saw you first, and you dismissed me as I deserved? That you were 'a regular tramp,' who inspired me with the greatest respect. And I still feel this respect for you, and because I look upon you as one of those uncommon women to whom an honest man may offer his hand and heart——"

"Oh do be silent, in God's name!" cried she, starting from her torpor and interrupting him. "Go, go away—say no more—each of your words is like a hot iron thrust into a wound. Oh, you do not know, and you shall never know."

"Folly, dear Fraulein! I shall never know? As if I wished to know, or as if anything that I could learn could possibly alter my feelings for you. No, my dear friend, those would not be the principles of a poodle. His master may be the saviour of his country, or may steal silver spoons; in either case he will respectfully lick his hand. Whatever may have been your reasons for taking that rash cold bath, I shall never seek to know them as long as the world endures. You were of course miserable, you had tasted many of the bitter rotten apples which hang on the tree of knowledge, and the cramp, which was the natural consequence, seemed to you unbearable. Very well, that is now behind us; we have cured our indigestion by a most powerful remedy, and shall by degrees be able to enjoy the homely fare which life for the most part serves up to us. Do you not see this, you best, you most precious of all artists? You could not be what you are, you could not play Beethoven as you play him, if you were capable of passing all the abysses and thorny hedges of this miserable existence completely unharmed, untorn."

He waited a little to see whether she would answer, then he again did as though he would approach her window; but again she kept him off with a gesture of

anguish, as though it would degrade him to touch her hand.

"No, no, no!" she cried, as if half suffocated. "You have a thousand times too good an opinion of me. I—oh, there is nothing on earth which deserves to live so little as I do, who is less capable of bearing her life than this wretched creature whom you, self-sacrificing as you are— But no, take away your hand; you do not know whom you would raise with it."

"Is it really so?" said he, with sudden calmness. "Well then we must call a spade a spade, so that we may understand one another. Statistics and public opinion, which is blind, agree that nine-tenths of the women who make away with themselves do it from unfortunate love affairs; they seek death because their passion has either been deceived or disregarded. Should your case be either of these, I must tell you that none of the vulgar prejudices of the world would restrain me from placing myself in spite of everything at your disposal. As I know you, you can have done nothing by halves, nothing that is low or mean, which could alone degrade you in my eyes, because that would destroy your image to me, and as it were give me the lie. Even if passion had thrown you into the arms of one who was quite unworthy, if it were cruel suffering caused by a vile betrayal or devilish baseness—"

He stopped suddenly, startled by the frightfully fixed, almost medusa-like, expression with which she looked him full in the face.

"I thank you," she said faintly; "'devilish baseness,' that is good, very good. It is a pity that I cannot explain to you why the words fit so exactly. For that—no lips could tell of that except in madness, and as yet unfortunately madness has not come. Perhaps if I keep saying your words over and over to myself, perhaps if I think a great deal of their

wonderful fitness—but no, fate will not be humane enough. Into the mud with the worm if he wishes to wriggle a little more, but to step on him, to give him the *coup de grâce*—God forbid! that would be much too humane, too noble, for a Providence worthy of veneration. Good God! how bitterly one's tongue speaks after tasting the things of this earth!”

She shuddered. Then she rose from her seat, as if roused by some power outside herself. “Are you really still here?” she cried. “Do you not feel that of all men I must hate you the most, because you have given me back to myself, have hurled the poor lost one back upon her fate just as she had thought to have escaped from it? It is another exquisite mockery that you should *now* come to me with your good, warm-hearted dreams of wishing to save me, when there is nothing more to save. Ha, ha! if you were to remain a little longer we might perhaps manage the madness. That would indeed be a deed of friendship by which you would make up for much. Will you not take a seat? We might have a little music. What would a few false notes more or less matter, they would not disturb the harmony of the spheres. Well! Don't you wish it? Why are you silent now?”

“Christiane,” he said, and an immovable, earnest will sounded in his voice, “I will remove my odious face from your sight—for to-day; but depend upon it, you will see me again. For, by my soul, you do not know, you cannot imagine, what means an honest brave man may find of healing wounds which are apparently mortal. I—oh, Christiane—here after all that you have said to me—I cannot give you up, I cannot leave you to yourself; and this frightful, incomprehensible fate, let me only have time to fight with it—I think I am the stronger of the two. Your life belongs to me; you had thrown it away, and I, the honest finder, bring it back to you; if therefore

you refuse to have it, it is mine. Only give me time, only promise me——”

“Nothing!” said she, wildly but resolutely, as if to arm herself against the power of his imploring words. “It is all up with me. Never—you will never see me again!”

She turned away and hid her face in both her hands, which she pressed against the bars of the window.

After a pause she heard him say, “Very well then, I will go. But every word that I have said stands. Henceforth your life is mine. I have yet to see who can take it out of my hands.” With that he left the room.

Lea and her father were waiting for him in the sitting-room. He passed them in silence as if he did not see them, and the expression of his face was so fixed and threatening that neither of them dared to speak to him.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

WHEN Edwin returned home late in the evening he found Balder lying on the bed, but dressed, with the little lamp by him, having apparently been reading. His face was even paler than usual, and though full of feverish suspense, the exhaustion of his whole frame was such that he could scarcely raise his head to greet his brother.

"What news do you bring?" he exclaimed.

"Nothing good. How should it be possible?" Edwin went up to the bed and bent over him. "Child," said he, "you ought to have been in bed long ago. Do you know you are quite cold and pale? I have nothing now but you. If you play me any bad tricks——"

"Oh, Edwin, I— But *you*, how is it with you and with—her? Tell me for God's sake what has happened? What has she said?"

"Nothing new, my boy; nothing that should surprise us. But it will be better not to talk about it to-day. I have taken a stiff walk and am now all right. Don't you see that I am quite calm? Why are you now beginning to excite yourself again instead of going to sleep, as I hope to do?"

"No, no," cried the youth, getting off the bed with an effort, while Edwin sought to poke up the fire in the stove; "I must know everything. Do you think I could sleep? Tell me."

"Very well then; we have had it all out, and have separated as good friends, as *very* good friends—who now only wish to avoid one another for the future. That is all, my dear fellow! Ah, come, now the fire is burning. It is shamefully cold here, and the night will be a long one, and will bring snow. Has Mohr not been here? it is his specialty to make good fires. And really now one is a capitalist one might allow oneself some sort of a supper. I will call Lore."

"I have taken care of that," said Balder. "I thought we should spend such a happy evening. She put everything there on the lathe. Oh, Edwin, is it all true?"

"What, my dear boy? That there are people, young ladies, moreover, who do not think your brother so charming as you do, you precious enthusiast? young ladies who would not prefer a tub and his heart to any fairy palace? Oh, child, if I really were the precious stone in human form which your brotherly kindness thinks me, we must not forget how poor and tasteless the setting is, and that elegant young ladies think more of the *façon* than of the quality. Keep a brave heart, we are too good to let ourselves go for less than our value. And I, fool that I was, to wish for anything else when I was already so well off! Have I not wife and child and brother and beloved all in one? Come, let us be merry. I feel desperately hungry, and the things in that corner look extremely appetizing."

"Poor, poor girl!" said Balder gloomily to himself. Edwin remained standing in the centre of the room.

"Thank you for saying that," said he, with a sudden change of tone. "For indeed she is worthy of having tears and blood shed for her. Not because she is unfortunate enough not to find my worthy person to her

taste—perhaps she is very wise in that—but that she should be a child of this world as she is, to be filled with shuddering horror at the thought of annihilation, and yet not to be capable of throwing herself into the eternal, I mean of feeling love. Oh, Balder, it is horrible! Such a heavy heart that it is dragging her down into the abyss of death, before she knows what she has been living for! Such a clear intellect that she seems justified in giving up for the sake of being at last at peace, an enigma which she has wearied herself out in trying to solve, even though that enigma be her own existence! Blood and tears, I tell you, just because *she* cannot weep; for this poor Undine has in her great despair none of the little means of comfort which relieve the sufferings of human creatures. When she dies not a drop of blood will flow. One day she will be found sitting before her looking-glass with her heart turned to ice.”

“Edwin, you think—she——”

“That she will make her own way out of this world, or marry the count. It will come to much the same thing. But hush! I hear Heinrich on the stairs. We will show him cheerful faces; his own days are not of the brightest.”

Mohr entered. It was touching to see how his gloomy face brightened when Edwin, without saying a word, gave him the letter from the faculty to read.

“I shall dedicate my comedy to these gentlemen,” said he. “They seem to be capable of valuing unusual merit.”

He remained till late in the night. They pulled the table up to Balder’s bed, and ate their frugal meal, as they conversed about the mystery of life and death, so that by degrees the oppression which lay on each of the three grew lighter, and in contemplation of the necessity of all earthly chances they became as calm as boatmen, who, following the current, draw in both

oars and sails, and lie on their backs gazing into the clouds. .

Only when the brothers were alone again did Edwin seem suddenly overcome by the recollection of all that he had gone through. "I would give my life to help her," he said to himself. Balder heard these words, but he remained dumb. When they had put out the light he heard Edwin get up again and come to his bed. "My boy," he said, "it is very cold over there. Go a little nearer to the wall; I should like to hold your hand till I fall asleep. I have nobody but you, and that is quite enough, when I feel that you are near me."

He laid himself by Balder's side, and they clasped their hands peacefully. It was not long before he was asleep, and breathing quietly like a man who has pleasant dreams, while Balder lay awake for hours, uneasily revolving all sorts of plans in his head.

When they awoke the next morning they were silent and full of their own thoughts, as was indeed usual with them at that early hour, and above all not a word was said of the previous evening. Edwin looked through his papers for the lecture, Balder copied a few models which had been lent to him by the master for whom he had been in the habit of working, and he only spoke once to inquire casually whether Edwin did not mean to answer the dean's letter at once.

"There is no great hurry about it," answered his brother. "But it will be written, you may depend upon it. A change of air would be the best thing perhaps for you as well."

"Certainly," said the sick boy. "I am longing myself to be out of this air." Edwin did not see the quiet smile which would have betrayed the secret meaning of these words.

"I must leave you to-day without any one to look after you, dearest," said Edwin, putting his papers into his pocket. "I hope you will be good, and that you

will neither work nor commit any other offence against police regulations. Good-bye, my dear boy. Do lie down a little; your hands are quite cold and damp again." With that he left the room.

Ten minutes later, Balder laid aside his pencil and began to exchange his invalid's garments for a complete dress. His hands trembled as for the first time after so many weeks he again took from the cupboard his old cloak and his little grey hat which he had worn on his last expedition down into the yard. Though his dress was old-fashioned and almost thread-bare, and though he made his way with difficulty by means of his stick, yet there was so much grace in his movements, and in the slight inclination of the beautiful head, that no one would have smiled at the overshoot cloak or at the shabby felt hat. He glided softly down the stairs. On the landing by Christiane's door it occurred to him how long it was since he had heard her play. He thought it must have been out of consideration for his illness, and he made up his mind on his return to knock at her door and to beg her to restrain herself no longer. Down-stairs he found the door of the workshop ajar. The foreman saw him go by, and called after him with a kindly-meant inquiry after his health, and the warning not to go and get cold. He answered jestingly, and managed to cross the yard without looking round at the little seat in the arbour. But in the passage of the front house he was forced to stand still in order to recover breath. His heart beat loudly; through the door into the shop he could hear the deep voice of Franzelius, lowered, but as it would seem in cheerful conversation, and every now and then a clear girl's laugh which he had not heard for weeks.

He felt only a passing stab, immediately afterwards he was quite calm and cheerful again; indeed he felt strong enough to enter and to greet without bitterness the two happy human beings.

"Perhaps on my way back," he thought. Then he limped on his way, and rejoiced that he met no one who could remonstrate with him on the risk he was running.

A piercing cold wind was blowing from the east, and driving a dry powdery snow along the streets. Fortunately an empty droschke was just passing. Balder called to it, and when seated in it wrapped himself closely in his cloak. It was, however, not the cold which made him shudder, but the feverish excitement of his blood at the thought of the decision which he was going to meet.

When he arrived before the house in the Rosenstrasse, he could not get out before the door, as that spot was already occupied by a smart carriage. He told his coachman to wait, and ascended the steps by slow degrees, so as not to arrive upstairs completely without breath.

Little Jean opened the door and stared at the unexpected visitor with eyes wider open than usual. "There is some one with my mistress, but I dare say she will see you." He returned almost directly, and with imperturbable gravity, and without a word, he opened the door of Toinette's room.

CHAPTER II.

WHEN she saw Balder enter she rose quickly from the sofa, and met him with the most charming friendliness, with her little hands outstretched as if to support his unsteady steps.

"You have come yourself to me, and so soon too," she cried. "Ought you to have done so? The weather is so very bad, my stairs are so steep, and yet you cannot think how glad I am to see you quite well again. Oh, let me introduce you to the count."

She turned to a tall slim gentleman, completely dressed in black, who sat leaning negligently back on a chair near the sofa, and who now only took notice of the young stranger in the shabby cloak by a slight inclination of the head. Balder's cheeks grew red, partly at the count's haughty manner, partly at the thought, So this is the man who has cut out Edwin! He let his clear eyes rest for a second on the features of the count, who had taken up a newspaper from the table, and appeared to be reading it attentively. He hardly knew what there was in these regular features, in this faultless form, which was so entirely displeasing to him, and excited at the same time a feeling of compassion. He also bowed in silence, and then sank down into the arm-chair which the beautiful girl had, with attentive kindness, drawn forward for him.

Now he sat opposite to her, and at first could find no words, so much did her appearance captivate him. In spite of Edwin's descriptions, he had never imagined her so beautiful, or with so much charming distinction, or that the sound of her voice and the glance of her black eyes would be so soft and innocent. She seemed to ascribe his silence to the exhaustion caused by the unwonted exercise, and gave him time to recover himself, while she rang for the page, and ordered water and sugar. Then she turned to him again, and asked him in the most friendly way how he felt, and how the doctor had recommended him to live.

Instead of answering he thanked her for the kind sympathy she had shown during these past weeks, and told her what an important part the palm tree had played in his dreams when his fever was high, and what a pleasure it had been to him when he was himself again. At first he spoke with hesitation and some embarrassment. But when he remarked the ironical smile on the count's face as he sat opposite to him, without uttering a syllable, he suddenly lost all shyness, and talked so brightly and wittily that Toinette thought him charming, and said that his brother had maligned him, describing him as a misanthropical hermit. She hoped she should now see him oftener; she felt quite angry with him that it was only through a severe illness that he should have found his way to her, and he might as well confess that his refusal to take part in the expedition to Charlottenburg had only proceeded from prejudice against *her*. Indeed how could she know whether Edwin might not also have calumniated her.

All this was said so cheerfully that Balder secretly wondered, whether it was coldness of heart or self-command which enabled her to talk of Edwin as if nothing had occurred between them, as if he would come again the next day and continue his old intercourse with

her? Thus thinking he became again silent, and she also lost her gaiety.

"You want to say something else," she began, after a pause. "I saw you keeping back something that was on your lips."

"Perhaps you may have seen right," he returned. "But if you will allow me I will say it another time. I will not disturb you any more to-day."

He cast a look at the count, and made a movement as if about to rise.

"Count," said the beautiful girl, with perfect composure, "I should like to speak a few words to Herr Balder in private. If you will kindly go in there for five minutes—you will find books on the table, and may feed my sparrows."

"I hope that the private audience will not be over long?" said the young nobleman, with an accent of sharpness, as he stood up, and curling his moustache, walked slowly into the neighbouring room.

She blushed a little. "Only have patience," she called after him. "Herr Balder is a less frequent visitor than you are, and one must make the most of the opportunity. Besides, as far as I know, you will be neglecting nothing very important."

At the door he bowed ironically to Toinette and said, "You are rather abusing your privileges, my Fräulein, but in case of necessity the room has another door. *Au revoir!*"

They were hardly alone when Balder seized Toinette's hand and pressed it earnestly. "Dear Fräulein," said he, "thank you for allowing me to see you alone. I will not try the gentleman's patience very long. The object of my visit, independently of the wish I felt to thank you personally, is soon told. My brother has told me from the very beginning how things have stood between you and him, and that yesterday you told him that there was no hope. I do not know whether you were really as serious when you said this

as he supposed you to be ; whether it is your last word. Listen, Fräulein ; my heart is so filled with pride of my brother that I could not bring myself to utter a word which could possibly sound like interceding for him to a girl who had seriously refused him. This is not merely a brotherly prejudice ; I have lived with him now for six years, and know what he is worth, and that the best wife in the world would be just good enough for him. If, therefore, there is some one who cannot recognize his value, it may cause him deep grief, but I for my part should console myself with the thought that there must be something wanting in her to be worthy of him and to make him happy ; namely, the belief in his nobleness of character, in his rich gifts, and the conviction that it would be an inexpressibly great happiness to be loved by such a man. As I have learnt to know you, dear Fräulein, through him and through my own experience of you, I have so high an opinion of your nature that I cannot believe you to be blind to Edwin's mind and character. His sarcastic way of speaking of himself, his unostentatious simplicity, his contempt of all pretence, cannot have deceived you as to the truth and warmth of his heart, or to the fact of its being a most uncommon man who has laid his life at your feet. If you nevertheless can endure the thought of losing him I must believe that there is another obstacle between you. You have always been honest and sincere with Edwin. Be the same with me, dear Fräulein ; tell me honestly whether I am mistaken, or whether I am right in believing that you would have accepted him had he stood alone, if he had not assumed the maintenance of a sick brother for how long who can tell."

She looked at him with the most extreme astonishment. "Dear Herr Balder, how can you for one moment——"

"You are right," said he, interrupting her, with a smile ; "it would be expecting too much to expect you

to carry sincerity to such a length as that. Therefore please say nothing, but let *me* say to you that this miserable obstacle does not in truth exist, or will, at all events, only exist for a few weeks. I have asked our doctor on his conscience, and fortunately he has one, so that had he given me *another* answer I should have had to believe him. The poor mortal now sitting opposite to you will very soon have to quit the humble place which he now occupies in the world. Edwin of course has no misgiving. One gets accustomed to looking upon what is unalterable as improbable, if one has to wait a little for its accomplishment. When at last it does take place, one must try and make the best of it; even Edwin will manage this in time. For my part I must say, dear Fräulein, that the world seems to me very beautiful. Your acquaintance, too, I would gladly have continued. But one must not be unreasonable. I have enjoyed the happiness of life in such purity, I might almost say in such concentrated essence, that I really must not complain because the portion intended for me is now consumed."

He was silent, and smiled at his own thoughts. When he looked up again he saw that her eyes were full of tears.

"Why do you cry?" he asked, in consternation. "I hope it is not at my fate, which does not even grieve me myself."

"No," she exclaimed with vehemence, quickly brushing away her tears, "I am not crying because of you, dear Balder—forgive me for treating you like an old friend, or rather like my own brother. You are not to be pitied; I *envy* you for your beautiful life and your still more beautiful death, even though it may not be so near as you now think. People get through so much, and doctors are not prophets. The tears which came into my eyes were for myself, that I should be such a poor fool as to have nothing to give in return for all the good and noble things which you

and your brother would like to give me, and which I must therefore refuse. Dear Balder, if only you knew. But why should you not know? If I am unhappy, is it not my one comfort that to you at all events I do not appear *worse* than I am? Will it not comfort me to explain to you why, with the best will, I cannot make people whom I care about as happy as they deserve of me?

"I have regretted a thousand times," she continued, smoothing back the hair on her temples, in order at the same time to dry her eyes unperceived, "that I did not confess this to your brother yesterday. I have been thinking ever since how I could manage to tell him; whether I should write to him, or whether I should ask him to come and see me once more. It will be all one whether I say it to him or to you. I know now the reason why I can never have any happiness in life, never, never, neither in myself nor in others, and you shall know it too, though it is about things which a young man and a young woman would not usually talk about. Dear friend, I like you very much, believe me, and I can give you no better proof of it than by telling you this sad secret which was only revealed to me a few days ago."

She looked quickly at the door through which the count had gone out. "I owe the information to him," she said in a low voice. "As his relations tried to dissuade him from entertaining the foolish idea of marrying me, chiefly by urging the lowness of my origin, he set on foot inquiries in my home; he wished at all events to ascertain whether anything dishonourable could be said of my family. The little which was known of my parents in the town did not satisfy him; he therefore addressed himself to the young prince, who has been lately living in his castle, and is on the point of marrying a cousin. The count, full of his foolish passion, did not deny *why* he wished to know this, and his Highness, who is now perhaps the only

person who knows anything about the matter, considered it his duty to warn him, by telling him everything that his mother had confided to him as a family secret before her death. Oh, dear Balder, what horrible things do happen in the world! A poor creature lives his life, his lot is a painful one, and he has not the slightest idea why he has to suffer. But indeed the better *reasons* are, the worst *comfort* they give. Since I have known *why* I am so, that it is all quite natural, and that I ought therefore not to wonder at my never having been happy myself or capable of making others happy, I have lost all hope of its ever being different." She fell back into the corner of the sofa, leant her head on the bolster, and stared up at the ceiling. "Do you know my story?" said she.

"My brother told me everything."

"He has told you *nothing*; I myself knew nothing of the truth, I did not even know my real parents. The good ballet master was not my father; my father was the prince, and the woman whom I called mother was nothing to me; my mother was a poor girl, beautiful and unhappy—far, far unhappier than her daughter. She loved a good young man who was too poor to marry her. It happened that the prince, who did not love his wife, and who never could bear to stay long in his castle, came to Berlin, saw the timid young thing in the street, and followed her. She would have nothing to say to him; his rank and his riches were no attraction to her; how gladly would she have remained in poverty in order to be true to her love! But her mother! Can you imagine how a mother can break the heart of her own child? This one did it. And she is dead, and her unhappy daughter is dead, and the child of this daughter, who was forced to give herself without love, this child of misery, lives under a curse, and must pay for the sins of her parents, and bear through life an unblessed heart *which cannot love*."

She was silent, and he also sat opposite to her struck dumb with the hopeless tone of her voice. In the neighbouring room they heard the count walking impatiently backwards and forwards. Outside in the streets there was the rumble of carriages, and a wintry sun shone through the clear panes. Suddenly Toinette rose in all her beauty, shook back her hair, and said with a short laugh—

“Pshaw! how horrible it all is! But what can one do? Here one is; one cannot help it. Only men seem to me pitifully stupid and cruel, who would make a poor breathing bit of misery responsible for its actions. I also would gladly have been a good warm-hearted humble fool, as others are, to make good people happy, and to allow others to make me happy, if things had gone as they ought; but as it is, my poor mother could give me nothing but her hatred and her cold dumb despair, while from my noble father I have inherited nothing but princely desires and empty hands. He was very fond of me, they say; the more so that the happiness he had bought with my mother lasted so short a time, for she died in giving me life. In order to be able at least to see me, for I am said to have been very like her, he arranged, in spite of the princess’s opposition, that I should be placed with my foster parents, and that I should pass for their child. But he himself died young, and he forgot to provide for me in his last will, and the princess never forgave me for coming into the world. If she could have lived to see me curse my own life, she might perhaps have forgiven me. But she is dead too, and now I am quite, quite alone.”

“Need you continue so, dear Fräulein?” said Balder, laying his hand softly on both her hands, which, firmly clasped together, rested on her lap.

“My friend,” she said, “I know that you are very good to me, both you and your brother. But it would be a crime if I were to persuade myself that you could

help me now that I see everything so clearly, that I know all about myself, and that it is in *my blood*. Would you persuade me to make your brother miserable? And he would be miserable, for I never could grow accustomed to poverty. Yes, if one *loved*—then I think all the petty cares of daily life would disappear. My mother would certainly not have sighed and complained if she had become the wife of the man she loved. But as it is, I will promise nothing I cannot perform. If it must be, I suppose I can lead my miserable life on my own account, *alone*, trembling at unpaid bills, and turning my worn-out dresses for the tenth time. The princess who is obliged to watch the geese may cry as much as she likes all by herself, and if the worst comes to the worst there will be nobody to hold me back; while if I have given my life into the hands of another, it no longer belongs to me, and I must go on enduring, even should I see that my misery is breaking the heart of that other. I care too much for your brother; please tell him so.”

She rose, as if to end the conversation. But Balder remained seated, and said after a pause, “And though you call us friends, you will give us no hope that you may conquer what you call your fate? Like you, I believe in the power of blood, but I believe also in the power of the mind, and still more in the power of love. There is only one thing which strikes me as hopeless, and that is a vulgar nature. I have not known many people, but yet among the number there have been some who were so well satisfied with what was bad that nothing nobler could ever touch them. But a noble nature like yours, whose misery is caused by solitude and the want of power to bestow happiness—no, dear Fräulein, I cannot believe that there is no future for your heart, that you must remain for ever cut off, sad and cold, that it will be in vain for loving hearts to try and thaw yours. I know my brother. When I repeat our conversation to him, he will not

think of himself, he will think only of you, he will feel it to be his duty to stand by you. You cannot believe what he is capable of. Not that he would think of conquering you for himself, of creeping into your heart against your will; but he will fearlessly give battle to the powers of darkness which have governed your youth, and," he added, with a melancholy smile, "it only makes me sorry that I shall not live to see you go to him, and say, as you will some day, You have won; my heart has become warm."

She slightly shook her head. "You are a good man, but a bad prophet," she said seriously, though with a smile. "But no matter. Only promise me to live, and who knows what you will see. And tell your brother—what you will. I doubt whether he will come again. He is very different from you, he has more passion, and is prouder, he will have 'all or nothing.' If he can learn to be satisfied with a little, I shall always be glad to see him, but he must come soon, for I cannot know what will become of me. Three days more and I must come to a decision, for even if I loved life, life is no more possible to me. Servitude, misery—or a third course which would not be the worst. And now, my dear friend——"

She looked towards the door, which had already been opened once and quickly shut again.

The youth rose and went up to her. "I thank you with all my heart for what you have confided to me, and I go with a lighter heart. But one more thing I must beg of you: if it is not possible for you to avoid the visits of this count, beware of letting him and Edwin meet here. As I know him he would not endure the haughty manner of this gentleman, and even his mere presence, his vapid cold smile, his face which proves him incapable of a noble thought, would be so hateful to him that he would beg you to choose between himself and this other. Indeed how is it possible that you can bear such a man in your

vicinity—such a caricature of true nobility? Why, all that is noble in your nature should——”

At this moment the door was softly opened, and the count appeared on the threshold.

“Pray do send away this garrulous young man, Fräulein,” he said, with cold scorn, not honouring Balder with a glance; “otherwise it will be my painful duty to give him a lesson in good breeding, and to make him understand that it is most unseemly to express his immature views about men so loudly that they whom they concern are forced to listen to them in the next room. Of course there can be no question of my feeling insulted by the opinion which a saucy fellow is kind enough to entertain of me, but——”

“You forget where you are, count,” broke in Toinette quickly, while Balder had grown red and pale, and in painful astonishment sought for an answer. “If you are tired of waiting you may go; I need render an account to no one of the length of time I may choose to talk with my friend.”

“Undoubtedly,” replied the count, bowing slightly. “You may choose your friends as you see fit, and nobody is responsible for their taste. I also hope to carry on my acquaintance with this hopeful young man, in a fitter place. Good-bye, Fräulein.”

He took his hat and left the room with a cold smile.

“What have you done, Balder?” cried Toinette. “You have made him very angry, and he will revenge himself. Why did I not warn you? These doors and walls are so thin!”

“Forgive me for this uncomfortable scene, which indeed I would gladly undo,” replied Balder, holding out his hand to her; “otherwise I do not feel anxious. The count must be too well aware of what is becoming to revenge himself for an involuntary mortification on one who is utterly defenceless. And then he will not

have very long to feel a grudge against me. Do I know indeed whether I shall ever take leave of you a second time?"

He bent over her hand, which she gave him mechanically. "Don't go yet," she said. "Wait till he has driven off. I do not feel comfortable about the affair. And you are exhausted. You ought to have a glass of wine."

He smilingly let go her hand. "Though I am not of the strongest," said he, "my nerves are such that I have no fear of anybody. Be quite at ease, dear Fräulein; I shall find my way home all right. Good-bye, and may you really be happy!"

He limped so quickly out of the room that little Jean, who was writing copies at a little table near the window on the landing, could not reach the door in time to open it for him. But when he had descended the stairs and reached the house door, he saw the count's carriage standing in the same place.

"He is waiting till I am gone, to go up again," he thought, and he was sorry to think that the scene in which he had just taken part should not be the last in the piece. But at the moment that he looked round for his droschke the carriage door was opened, and the count alighted.

"Young gentleman," he said, going up to Balder, "we have not yet done with one another. I have taken the liberty of waiting for you here, in order to give you a bit of well meant advice."

He stopped for a moment, and at the same time measured the youth from head to foot. Balder looked him calmly in the face.

"I am quite curious," he said——

"You are still very young, and, besides, your state of health is such that one can hardly lay great stress on anything you may say. But for that very reason you would do well not to take advantage of my forbearance. I wish you to understand that I do

not expect to meet you a second time at the house of this young lady."

"It will quite depend on yourself, my lord, to avoid me. For my part, I have no reason for avoiding you."

"Then you will have to put up with the treatment with which I shall think fit to meet your insolence."

Balder had turned deadly pale, his lips trembled, but it was a look of strange sadness rather than of menace, which he turned upon the man who had insulted him.

"My lord," he said, "I regret that I expressed my opinion of you so loudly that it could be heard by you—I am always sorry to hurt any one, but still more do I regret that your behaviour should confirm my hasty judgment; I think we have now nothing further to say to one another."

He bowed coldly and signed to his droschke, which had been waiting a little way off. At that moment he felt himself held back by the cloak.

"With you, my young friend," he heard the count say in a voice choked with anger, "I have quite done; your suffering state gives you the freedom, which you have been led away to abuse, of saying all that you wish with impunity. But you would oblige me by being good enough to give your brother the same warning which I have given to you. Out of consideration for the lady to whom, as I hear, he is paying court, I should prefer that she should be spared the difficulty of choosing between him and me. I am not accustomed to take my chance with all sorts of people, and the affair might have disagreeable results for him. You will kindly inform him of that, my young friend! And now I will not detain you longer in this wind; I hope you have understood me."

He withdrew, bowed with ironical politeness, and sprang into his carriage, which drove off quickly.

Balder remained rooted to the spot, struck dumb.

Involuntarily he put his hand to his heart, where he felt a sudden spasm. But it passed. The fixed rigidity of his features gave way; he smiled sadly whilst he drew the cloak more tightly about his shoulders.

"That poor man!" he said, "I wonder how any one feels who is governed by such instincts as he is! And she—she could—no, Edwin, he cannot be dangerous to you, or she would never be worthy to possess your love!"

The droschke had drawn up close to where he was standing, and the driver, struck with compassion at the sight of his agitated pale face, got down from the box to open the door and to help him in.

"Listen, sir," said he; "it would be better for you to go home to your mother than to be paying visits. There is not much warmth to be found in an old droschke like this, and your teeth are chattering like a sentry's when it is ten degrees below zero."

"You are right, my good friend," said the youth with a smile. "But I think they will relieve guard soon. Only drive me home quickly. I shall hardly be exposed to the air again just yet."

CHAPTER III.

EDWIN was sauntering down the Friedrich Strasse with Marquard, whom he had met on his way back from the university.

"I thought at once that it was nothing but one of Fortune's soap bubbles," he was saying. "It would be as impossible to move at this season of the year as it would be to leave him behind alone. Of course you would take the very best care of him; indeed Mohr offered to take up his abode altogether in the tub as vice-Edwin. But all the same, my dear fellow, don't try and persuade me. You don't know how we have spoilt one another. There are often hours when talking becomes most painful to him. I then can read the signs on his forehead as easily as my own handwriting. And you may laugh at me for being sentimental, but I should get on very badly without him. During these last six years my best thoughts have always come to me in his presence. If sometimes I came to a standstill, I had only just to look at him, and suddenly I found what I wanted in his eyes. I verily believe that were I to go thither alone, I might lose my power of speech, and the gentleman down there might think that I had ploughed with other people's oxen, *i. e.* employed some one else to

write the prize essay for me. *Habeat sibi!* Some other way will be opened to me."

"You must know what you are about," replied Marquard, who in an elegant fur coat was walking by Edwin's side with apparent indifference. "If only it does not excite him to feel that he is the hindrance. Perhaps it is only an idea—you might use your *liaison* with the princess of the Rosenstrasse as a pretext for not wishing to go away."

"Unfortunately your good advice comes too late. He knows that everything is at an end."

"What?—all at an end and so suddenly? How did that come to pass?"

"It is a long story; I will tell it to you another time."

They walked on for a bit in silence. At last Marquard said: "It is quite clear that I am the only practical one of the lot; for even our tribune, though he has shown more sound common sense than I should have given him credit for, in choosing from among the 'people' a wife whose father is a householder, yet he will hardly succeed in becoming a steady father of a family, and quiet citizen. You, my noble philosopher, fall in love with a psychological problem, and our satirist, instead of seeing about getting his comedy 'I am I, and I stake myself,' performed during his lifetime——"

"Do you know anything fresh of him? He did not come yesterday for his chess."

"His queen checkmated him, and it happened yesterday. The game is played out; when I looked in towards evening the Zaunkönigs were sitting in their nest with troubled faces. The strange night-bird which they had harboured had flown away, and no one knows whither——"

"Do you think that the poor creature can have made a second attempt to——"

"That is what her kind friends fear; she stole away

behind their backs. But I have reassured them. After a conversation which Mohr forced upon her, when he talked no doubt with the best intention, but in his craziest manner, she waited till Papa König and his daughter had gone out. Then she suddenly emerged out of her corner, and asked the cook to lend her some money, as she wished to go into the town to buy a winter cloak. When she had received the twelve or fourteen thalers, in fact all the cash possessed by the cook—she got into a droschke and drove away. It is not likely that she should intend to purchase a pistol, because she may have taken a prejudice against water; there are much cheaper ways of procuring a ticket for eternity. Besides, so many days have passed since that unfortunate night, that we may conclude she has come to a better mind. In a pencil note to Lea, she bade her farewell, and begged her to make no search for her; they should hear from her as soon as she could make up her mind to live, and to recall herself to those who had been so kind to her, though it had been against her will. The Feyertags are to sell her furniture, and the piano, to deduct from the proceeds the rent and the sum she had borrowed, and to give what might be over to the poor. The style of the letter was as resolute as the woman, but it was not that of one on the point of committing suicide. I am a connoisseur in such things, for I once made a collection of the autographs and last letters of suicides, so that I have had experience in the style which is only separated two steps from eternity."

"And Mohr?"

"He returned that evening; he seemed in the mean time to have thought of a plan, or to have still some question to which he was anxious to find an answer. When he found the cell empty—no one had ever thought of an escape, as of course the imprisonment was voluntary—he grew even more absorbed, fiercer and more uncivil than he has been the last few weeks.

Even the little Zaunkönig, who is usually capable of bearing a great deal, seemed somewhat nettled at this strange intellectual want of manners. However, all honour to the little man! He has shown himself a true Samaritan to this poor thing, for from his German-Christian point of view suicides would as a rule be looked upon as the refuse of humanity, and as God's poor step-children, who having come short of His grace, are laid on the other side of the churchyard wall. As for Lea's behaviour to the stranger, it was above all praise. My little Adele grows quite jealous when I talk to her of the self-devotion, sense, and discretion shown by the Zaunprincess."

"And has no reason been discovered for this desperate step?" said Edwin. "When I look back at our revels in Charlottenburg, and think of her playing, she seems to me to have been in as good spirits as any of us; of course, in her habitually gloomy way."

Marquard shrugged his shoulders. "Who can tell?" he said; "perhaps Lea. At all events if ever I began on the subject, she held her tongue as one might do who is without the talent of lying, and therefore prefers to keep her mouth shut. Mohr, who would make shorter work with any one from whom he hoped to learn anything, seemed till yesterday to have had no suspicion of anybody. But early this morning, old Lore tells me, he went into the poor woman's room, under pretence of wishing to buy her piano. He seems to have hunted about in every corner, and to have ended by finding something—a little book, at the sight of which he uttered an inarticulate cry or groan. What it can have been is only known to his 'so-called gods.' However, he is happy now; he has an object in life, namely, to discover the key of this riddle and to seek out the lost one."

"I have sometimes wondered whether—do you happen to have met a certain Candidate Lorinser?"

The doctor did not answer; they had just turned the

corner of the Dorotheen Strasse, and Marquard's keen eye had at once remarked a number of people standing silent and motionless round a droschke in front of Meister Feyertag's house.

"What's that?" said he. "Is it the neighbours standing to see Fraulein Reginchen drive out to pay visits on her betrothal? Surely it is not time for that yet. No; there seems to have been an accident."

Edwin heard him no longer. Filled with a sudden foreboding, he quickened his steps and reached the house at the moment that a lifeless form, carefully raised by the foreman and the driver of the droschke, was being carried into the house. He heard the people about him say, "There comes his brother!"

Then he lost consciousness. Those nearest to him held him up, for as he was staggering up the steps he seemed on the point of falling.

It was, however, a giddiness which lasted but for a minute. Immediately afterwards he again heard Marquard's voice. "Hold up your head, Edwin! Come, it may not be the worst!" With the help of his friend he raised himself with an effort and allowed himself to be led into the house.

The passage was full of the people of the house and of curious neighbours; they all made way for him in silence. In the yard stood all the workmen, looking up to the upper windows as if they expected a message from them. But not a word was spoken; the whole house seemed suddenly to be holding its breath with terror.

Now the coachman reappeared in the doorway. "Good Lord, what a misfortune!" said he, going up to Edwin. "Such a young gentleman too! I really thought at first it was a young lady dressed up, till he began talking with the strange gentleman, and then he looked a regular man, and his eyes flashed. He heated himself a little with talking, as I very well saw, and I shut up his window for him, and then he

was up to making a joke, when I told him that his teeth chattered as if he was an old sentry. And to think of his losing his poor life in this manner! And I never remarked the whole way from the Rosenstrasse to this place that he was, so to say, driving into eternity in the old droschke all the time; are you his brother? Well, I am in no hurry for the fare."

Edwin shuddered. His voice failed him. Marquard paid the coachman and took his number, in order to make further inquiries about what had occurred. Then he helped Edwin up the stairs.

They had laid the unconscious youth on his bed, still in the cloak as he had been lifted out of the carriage. No one had gone up with him except the foreman, Meister Feyertag, and his wife; Reginchen had crept after them, but not venturing to enter had remained cowering on the staircase as pale as a ghost.

As Edwin, leaning on Marquard, entered the tub, Madame Feyertag was kneeling by the bed rubbing Balder's cold temples with a strong essence. Marquard did not stop her; he indeed busied himself for a few minutes with the motionless body. Then he turned to Edwin, who had fallen on the foot of the bed. "Poor fellow!" said he. "Come, be a man, Edwin. It would only have lasted a few weeks. And he has got through it, as quickly and as peacefully as possible. Only look at his calm face."

He was interrupted by a loud burst of crying. Feyertag led his wife with tender force from the room; she was weeping uncontrollably as if for her own child; and the foreman, whose face was also covered with tears, crept after them. He had wanted at first to say something to Edwin, but had refrained. When he reached the workshop he seated himself on his stool, and hid his face in his hands.

Half an hour afterwards, when the other workmen stole in to their work again, quite expecting to be scolded, they found the hot-tempered man in the

same position. He was as if transformed, till towards evening the apprentice began softly whistling to himself, whereupon he burst forth and abused him as a heartless beast, that on such a day he could twist up his lips and whistle *Jungvern kranz*.*

In the other parts of the house also it was as still as if with this one life all the joys of life which had surrounded it had gone out too. Everybody moved on tiptoe and closed the doors very gently. Towards evening when the maid was going to the well and saw the open window of the upper room, she crept away with the empty pail, drying her eyes as she went, and fetched the water from the pump of one of the neighbouring houses.

In the afternoon Mohr had come, an hour later Franzelius, each without the slightest misgiving. But Meister Feyertag sat in the shop and waylaid all who wished to enter the house, in order to save Edwin from troublesome visits. Mohr did not say a word or betray his emotion in any way, so that the master looked after him with a shake of the head, as, muttering gloomily, he left the shop in order to go up to the tub. But it was a long time before he got up there. Before ascending further he had crept into Christiane's room, and there, sitting in the darkness, had given way to the inward storm by which he was shaken, before he ventured up to Edwin. Franzelius, on the contrary, had fallen on his father-in-law's neck, with such a heart-breaking burst of sobs that the shoemaker, who had hitherto never felt quite sure of his son-in-law, because he looked upon him as a blood-thirsty revolutionary, now felt in secret that his wife had been right in saying that Reginchen could not have found a better husband.

It was curious that both the friends should have shrunk from letting Edwin see their first burst of emotion, that they should both have waited to pay the

* Out of *Der Freischütz*—sung by every child in Germany.

common debt of human weakness before appearing before him as usual. Was this the result of the habit which had grown upon them during the last few weeks of regarding the tub as a sacred corner where all selfish sorrows and passions would be out of place? Or were they afraid of not being able to bear the sight of the survivor if they had not first composed themselves?

They met upon the stairs, just as Mohr had left Christiane's room. Without saying a word these two old enemies fell into one another's arms and embraced as if nothing had ever been between them. A solemn oath of eternal friendship was silently exchanged between them, and it was hand in hand that they ascended the steps.

They found Edwin alone, in the same position in which Marquard had left him an hour before when he had gone away to his patients. Balder lay like a warrior who had fallen on the field of battle, wrapped in his mantle; Edwin was lying at the foot of the bed. He now raised himself half up, and stretched out his hands to his friends with a faint smile.

"Is that you?" he said; "I am glad you have come. He is so beautiful! I almost grudged being the only one to look at his face. Can one realize that he will never open his eyes again? And yet—it is Marquard who says so—he must know." Then after a while:

"Take a chair, Franzel. Forgive my remaining seated. We need not act a comedy among ourselves, and I cannot bear to move. Though it is well for him, and I grudge him nothing, yet it is hard to think how soon we shall see this face no more."

Mohr had seated himself on a chair opposite to the bed; Franzelius, leaning against the door, was gazing with streaming eyes at the closed eyelids and the marble brow of the dead boy, whom they had loved so deeply. When it became so dark in the room that it was impossible to distinguish the features, Mohr rose

suddenly. He insisted on taking Edwin to his lodgings, and on giving him some wine and something to eat. You have a great deal before you, and must not waste your strength. Franzel will stay here; we will send him up a light. We can take turns in watching through the night."

Without will of his own, and as if he were walking in his sleep, Edwin allowed them to do what they would with him. The strong wine which Mohr obliged him to take threw him into a deep sleep for half an hour. When he suddenly awoke, he uttered a cry, so that Mohr sprang up in alarm. "It is nothing!" he said, with a sad shake of the head. "I was only dreaming that I heard Balder's voice; as I tried to take his hand I awoke, and then I remembered it all. It felt as if something had given way within me. But I can stand on my feet quite well now. Only my eyes feel as if they were burnt out. Come, we must not keep him waiting too long——"

When about to enter the room of death, they stood still in surprise on the threshold. With the help of the people of the house, Franzelius had employed these two hours in erecting a sort of catafalque. The turning-lathe had been pulled into the middle of the room and had been covered with some drapery, the coffin which they had procured in haste was placed on it, and they had laid Balder therein. At his head stood the palm-tree, at the side of this a couple of laurels which the old tenor had sent over. His wife had added a couple of silver branch candlesticks, in which wax candles were burning on each side of the bier, throwing a pure light on to the beautiful pale countenance. In the place of the cloak the body was covered with a clean sheet, on which the little hands lay softly. The white cat had crept in by the open window, and after having walked several times round the coffin, had curled herself up at the foot, with her yellow eyes fixed on the candles.

Edwin seated himself on Balder's empty bed and drew his friend towards him. "Thank you," said he. "We will not let him be touched by any strange hand—will we? By no one who has not loved him."

Franzelius pressed his hand in silence and turned away to hide his tears. Mohr had seated himself before the chess-board which stood on a little table in the corner and mechanically began to place the men.

They had not sat very long in this silence when they heard a gentle knock at the door. Mohr went to see who was outside and re-entered at once saying: "The Zaunkönig is there with Lea and the professorin. They only wanted to hear how you were, and not to trouble you in any way, but I thought that if you had no objection we would let them in." Edwin nodded and rose. When the little painter had entered, and had cast a look at the simple catafalque, his tears broke forth. He sought blindly for Edwin's hand, and held it tight, while he wept into his hat. The professorin also hid her bright round face with her handkerchief. Lea without looking at Edwin had gone up to the coffin, and seemed completely frozen with wonder at the incomprehensible mystery of death. Her face was as still and as white as that of the dead. In her eyes alone, which, without a quiver of the lashes, were turned on to the noble countenance of death, there shone a dark flame of life.

For a long time no word was spoken. Then the professorin, drying her eyes, approached Edwin. "Forgive me for having come too. I could not help it; you need not be afraid of my forcing on you that comfort which would be none to *you*. But to me—to all of us—you will not grudge the belief which we hold that God has called His child to Himself, and that we, God's other children, shall find him in those heavenly mansions—even you, my dear friend, who till then will miss him the most."

"Thank you," replied Edwin. "Your intention is

very, very kind. You wish to give me the best that you have, for you look upon me as sadly impoverished. And indeed I *have* lost a great deal, for what can make up for the joy of taking in with each breath daily, hourly, every look, every tone, which comes from such a spirit! I will not speak of him; he never would suffer me to praise him to his face; and see how foolish one is, I should be afraid that that poor shell there would begin to blush. Later, behind his back, my best comfort will be to talk of him. Besides, do you really think that I shall not see him daily and hourly even without waiting for a meeting in Heaven? If I had only that to hope for then indeed there would be but little chance of my remaining here at all. But I *have* him *here*—he can never be torn from me; the happiness of having known such a man in the flesh can never fade away, as the body itself must do. This spiritual communion is all that can really live or be in truth eternal; it is transmitted through thousands of transformations; it is an unquenchable sea of flames, even when the individual brain and heart, which for a time has helped to nourish the fire, is no more. That may turn to ashes if only it has poured its heat into other souls during the short time that it burned so brightly.”

He was silent again. She had listened with some emotion, had shaken her head almost imperceptibly, but had suppressed all contradiction. Edwin went up to Lea.

“Thank you for having come,” said he, pressing her hand. Great tears suddenly stood in her eyes, but she did not say a word. “Look how beautiful he is!” continued Edwin softly. “I know that you also will never forget these features, and therefore I am glad that you should have seen him. His smile indeed will awake no more: and his eyes!—dear Fräulein, it is too much for you,—you had better go home. I will come in a day or two; you must take care of yourself.”

The girl was violently agitated; he signed to Herr König, who took her gently by the hand and led her away.

The professorin embraced Edwin with motherly kindness; then she followed the other. Again silence fell upon the little room, and in this way several hours passed, till Marquard came and insisted that Edwin should come and spend the night at his house. "To-morrow," replied the latter. "Let me do as I like to-night. You had better all go away, and I will remain; you may be assured it will be the best for me. I shall sleep, and my quiet companion will not disturb me."

At first Marquard would not hear of this, but he was obliged to give in, and so at last they left him with his dead. It was ten o'clock, a cold, cheerless winter night; a few flakes of snow were blown by the wind through the open window, and every now and then the candles flickered as if on the point of going out. Edwin had thrown himself on his bed, in his clothes, and had covered himself with Balder's cloak. And there he lay listening to the wind outside, to the crackling of the candles, and to the rumbling of the carriages afar in the busy town. No sleep took pity on his senses, only a rapidly-changing dream in which he saw scenes of his earliest childhood. Then Toinette in a carriage by the side of a strange man looking at him coldly and sadly, then Lea's thoughtful face near to her mother's bust. When he opened his eyes in order to get quit of these crowding shapes, he saw the round yellow eyes of the cat who would not stir from the bier. At last this made him quite uncomfortable. He got up, took the animal in his arms and carried it to the door in order to put it out on the stairs. When he opened the door he saw a figure cowering on the threshold who had apparently been peeping through the keyhole.

"You here, Reginchen?" he exclaimed much startled.

The girl had risen and stood before him like a discovered criminal trembling in every limb.

"Ah! Herr doctor!" she stammered at last. "Don't be angry with me. I could not sleep; I could not rest for seeing him, however much I might shut my eyes—I felt as if I must—I thought perhaps if I had seen him up here it would leave me in peace, and so I crept up-stairs; through the key-hole I could just see his face—but then I could not go away again. If you had not come I think I should have stayed kneeling here all night till I had fallen."

"Will you not come in!" he said, taking her by the hand. "Don't be afraid to go nearer. I will cut you off a lock of his hair. Would you like it?"

"No! no!" she said putting up her hands. "Not in there; not a step nearer! I am so afraid of him; I am afraid of his opening his eyes and asking—oh, Herr Edwin, you do not know. Let me go. If I was to touch a bit of his hair, it would—oh! it was not my fault that I was so stupid and did not understand him! Oh my God! it breaks my heart!"

A violent fit of sobs choked her voice. But when Edwin passed his arm round her shoulders and spoke to her kindly, she suddenly tore herself away from him and darted down the stairs like an arrow, and he remained long standing in the darkness, thinking of this unaccountable riddle, before he threw himself on his cold bed.

CHAPTER IV.

THE funeral took place on the morning of the third day. Franzelius, who had undertaken the arrangement of all the melancholy details, insisted that this last duty should be performed at six o'clock in the morning. "The parson will then perhaps oversleep himself," said he. And Edwin had agreed. The clergyman of their part of the town, who, as professor of theology, had had some professional intercourse with Edwin, had called the day after the event, in order to condole and to ask for a few details for his funeral sermon.

"You would do me a great favour," Edwin had answered, "if you would only say what is absolutely necessary; what the forms of the Church require. A funeral sermon, on any one with whom the preacher is totally unacquainted, always seems to me very objectionable; and besides, as my brother held the same opinions as I do about these things, much would be said by his open grave against which he would protest if he could hear it."

The preacher thought perhaps that the softened soul of a mourner would be good ground for the reception of the seed of tradition, but Edwin cut short all further discussion, and his colleague left him, not in the best of humours. Franzelius had a further

reason for choosing this dark early hour. A workmen's musical association, of which he was a member, wished to sing in the churchyard, and at a later hour they could not all be collected. But he said nothing of this to his friend.

He had kept his word, and allowed no strange hand to touch the body. Even the most painful thing of all—namely, the fastening down of the coffin-lid—he did himself. Then when the bearers were with difficulty carrying their burden down the crooked little staircase, he took Edwin's arm, and guided his mechanical steps on his last sad expedition.

The streets would have been dark if it had not been for the snow, and few people stood at the door. Edwin nodded to those whom he knew, and then entered the foremost of the four mourning-coaches, which immediately afterwards began to move. He was accompanied by Mohr, Marquard, and Franzelius. In the second carriage sat Meister Feyertag and the old gentleman from the first floor, who, in spite of the cold and of the earliness of the hour, was determined to give his fellow-lodger this proof of his sympathy. The third carriage belonged to the little painter. He had come alone, and meant to drive alone, when he remarked the foreman, who with a large mourning streamer on his hat, and a band of crape on his left arm, was preparing to accompany the procession on foot. Immediately the painter called to his coachman to stop, opened the door, and obliged the honest man to seat himself in the carriage, to which in his modesty he only consented after many refusals.

Finally the fourth and last carriage contained a young Pole, together with the president of a club which counted many foreigners among its members, and which contributed the most numerous contingent to Edwin's lectures. They came to the funeral only out of respect for their teacher, for they had not known Balder, and they at once pulled down the blinds in order to shorten

the journey by chatting about the theatre, about the news of the day, and club affairs, and by smoking paper cigarettes.

A girlish face, all disfigured with weeping and hidden in a thick handkerchief, looked out of the upper window after the carriages as they moved off at a foot's pace. It was Reginchen, who for the last two days had not shown herself, having steadfastly refused to see even her betrothed.

The road led out through the Oranienburg Gate and a considerable distance through the suburb before the church-yard was reached. The air was soft as before a thaw, and the covering of snow over which they walked to the grave gave way noiselessly under their feet. Near the new heap of earth stood the preacher, behind him a great throng of dark figures—the workmen who had been told by the printer that he had lost his dearest friend.

The clergyman, whom Edwin had greeted with a movement of his hand, now read the funeral service out of his book, and then stepped to the edge of the grave into which the coffin had already been lowered.

He said :

“In the midst of life we are in death.” “Those who turn away from the light of heavenly truth carry the darkness of death in their souls. They live as if they were never to die, and die as if they were to live no more. But what will be their terror, their misery, on that day when the graves will open and the dead will come forth to receive the crown of life or the sentence of eternal damnation! The words of the Judge will sound in their ears: I sent salvation unto thee, but thou hast rejected it; the gospel was preached unto thee, but thou didst close thine ears! In thy vain self-righteousness thou didst think that thou couldst redeem thyself, and thou hast judged thyself. Then will pride humble itself before the throne of the Most Highest, and stubbornness will be crushed before

the majesty of the Son of man. Then will lips implore for mercy which on earth poured forth blasphemy, and which said as Peter did: I do not know the man. But we who stand round this melancholy grave, will join in silent prayer to God, we will implore Him not to enter into judgment with this our brother, but to illuminate with a ray of His grace this life which has been cut off in the midst of its errors and frailties, and to wash it clean from its guilt!"

An unbroken silence followed these words. The preacher had folded his hands over his book and closed his eyes in silent prayer.

Suddenly from among the group of friends who were standing at the foot of the grave the suppressed voice of Franzelius was heard:

"Let me speak, I *cannot* hold my tongue; I should despise myself as a miserable coward if I could hear such words over his grave without protesting in the name of those who have known and loved him. No offence must be given? Say that to those who are not ashamed to introduce the strife of opinions even into the church-yard, where death lays even the bitterest enemies side by side. No, my friends," he continued, raising his voice and springing on to the mound which was covered with snow, "we at all events have not assembled here in order to stammer a trembling petition for a poor sinner, who is lost to all eternity unless he be treated with mercy rather than justice. He, though dead, will never be lost to us; and as in truth he did redeem himself from the curse of frail humanity, from the terror of blind delusion, and from the bonds of selfishness, his image will help us to set *ourselves* free and to become more and more worthy of the happiness of having been loved by him. Yes, he loved you also, my friends, though you never saw his face nor heard his voice. His large heart beat for all his brothers, for all who are poor and miserable, for all the children of the world, who come they know not whence and

go they know not whither, and who are too honest to comfort themselves with fables and to lull themselves to sleep with dreams. Is anything holy if not his grave? For do you know *whom* we have buried here? A workman, my friends, who divided his last penny with all who were poorer; a poet, who never degraded his inspiration for fame or money; a hero, whose last deed was a sacrifice for those whom he loved. And this life was one of darkness? This grave deserves the appellation of 'melancholy,' where penitential sighs and pharisaical petitions for mercy should resound? Oh, my Balder, I know that even this manifestation of a gloomy, intolerant spirit of dogmatism would have been met by your quiet smile, which was your only weapon against all attack! But we are not yet in peace, we are still fighting. We must be the champions of the weak, of them who still make themselves miserable about forms, who prefer giving up their freedom to resisting; we must deliver them from the hands of their tyrants, so that they may learn to know and to love this world instead of despising all its beauty for the sake of another world which they have built out of dreams. An earth which has been trodden by you, a sky to which your eye has been raised—no, a thousand times no! such a world is not a vale of misery, and even, in bitter grief by the side of your grave, the triumphant feeling is ours that we have possessed you, and all the misery of this life is richly compensated for by the certainty that your noble heart will continue to live in our hearts. Balder, my friend, my brother—"

Suddenly his voice failed him, he pressed his closed fist against his eyes and turned away. But almost immediately he recovered himself, and signed to the singers, who were standing in a crowd behind him. Then at once a four-voice choir began to sing a song, the words of which Mohr had composed to the melody of 'Integer Vitae.' At first, in consequence of the

emotion of the singers, their voices were somewhat unsteady, but with every note they gained additional purity and power.

“Brother, with tender thoughts our hearts are swelling
Ere we surrender thee to thy last dwelling ;
The strength serene, upon thine image seen,
Of hope is telling.

“Noble thou wert—though not where castles tower,
But where the wretched dwell, was felt thy power,
The undefended, the poor, untended,
Thou hast befriended.

“Thou chosen hero, whom in pride bewailing—
High-soul'd and fountain of our joy unfailing ;
Ah, how sad and faint, breathing ne'er a plaint,
Saw we thee paling !

“The chain is riven, life has fill'd its measure,
Death now has given rest from pain and pleasure.
Sleep !—we will follow on some peaceful morrow
When we have striven !”

The song died away solemnly, but no one moved round the open grave. When they looked up after a silent pause they saw that the preacher had disappeared from their midst. The old grave-digger had also taken his departure, feeling far from comfortable at the unwonted scene. He had left his spade behind him. Edwin, standing between Mohr and Marquard, was staring with dry eyes, as if he had been a departed spirit, into the grave which was now filled up as every one went and threw in a shovelfull of earth, so that the coffin, which was covered with wreaths, soon disappeared from sight. Franzelius went up to Edwin ; they held out their hands to one another, but not a word was spoken. It was too soon to expect that he should be able to rouse himself from the numbness which the sense of his loss had brought ; and the homeward journey was accomplished in gloomy silence. He took leave of his friends at the door of his house and ascended alone to his empty cell.

He found everything in order ; there was nothing to recall the grief which had a day or two before passed through this quiet room. A clear fire crackled in the stove, the breakfast stood as usual on the table in the middle of the room, the lathe had been pushed back into its habitual place by the window, and all the tools were arranged on it as usual.

But on Balder's chair lay the little screw-driver with which Franzelius had fastened up the coffin. At this sight Edwin could contain himself no longer ; he threw himself down upon the chair and gave way to the bitterest tears.

CHAPTER V.

WHEN Marquard came on the following day to call on Edwin, he found him at his desk, with a pen in his hand, and his head resting on his left hand. A sheet of white paper lay before him.

"Good morning, Fritz!" said he; "you have just come at the right moment. I have to come to a decision, and everything in me is as if sealed up. I need some one to decide for me. Perhaps you can do so."

He turned his eyes, which were heavy with sleeplessness, on to his friend, and tried to smile. It was painful to see his effort to assume an unmeaning chatty tone.

Marquard shook his head.

"To decide for you?" he inquired.

"Yes, indeed; nothing less than to dip this pen into this inkstand and to write down the words, 'Dear Sir,' meaning the most worthy dean. Will you believe me, I have been struggling for the last two hours with this herculean task, and have not yet moved a finger to accomplish it?"

"You might do something better."

"Gladly. If it would not require much intellect."

"Only enough to pack a portmanteau, and to take your place in a train; my fur boots are at your service,

also travelling money. If you will only swallow the dose for once without racking your brains over the prescription, and if you will pack up to-day ! ”

“To-day ? ”

“What is the good of writing to say that you will come ? Go, and there you are. I know perfectly well what you would say : that you are not yourself just now, that you would be afraid of not doing yourself justice. That is all nonsense. If you do not go at once it is a question whether you will ever present yourself at all, or whether you will not end by absenting yourself altogether, and going the way of our Balder. You have not been the thing for months, and you have had so much to try you ; it would have gone hardly with a stronger man than you. So come, make an end of it—put on a tidy coat, visit your superiors and colleagues, set the tread-mill of your career in motion, and let the grey substance of your brain have rest, so that it may make good its losses. If you don’t do exactly as I tell you, I will answer for nothing except for the nothing in which you will soon find your humble self. Did you sleep ? ”

“I think so,” answered Edwin, nodding absently. “The night before last from two to three.”

“I thought so ! ” grumbled the doctor, throwing his hat violently on the table. “And nobody came near you yesterday to perform the charitable act of wearying you to sleep ? What is the use of having friends who are both poets and—readers ? Where on earth was Mohr with his celebrated comedy ? And our precious Franzel ? Good Heavens—”

“Philosophy turned poetry out of the door in the afternoon,” said Mohr, who entered at the moment and heard what Marquard was saying. “However, don’t alarm yourself, doctor. I do not feel the least offended. It is well known that you materialists have not sufficient classical education to distinguish between Orpheus and Morpheus. How do you do, Edwin ?

I have only come to say that to-day again I am good for nothing. My salt has lost its savour, or has perhaps become bitter, perhaps as bitter salt it may have the merit of contributing to my purification; forgive this bad witticism, but the times are too bad for good ones; and then I wanted, besides, to tell you why the tribune cannot show himself here to-day any more than he did yesterday. He is in confinement."

"Franzel?"

"In prison. The police have opened their fatherly arms and have taken their erring child on to their lap. We need not pity him. It is what he likes. My phrenological knowledge has long told me that he possesses *la bosse du martyr*."

"But the reason, the pretext?"

"Disturbance of a public service of the church. Your reverend colleague, Edwin, whose silence we imputed to kind consideration, drove at full speed from the churchyard to the police station, in order to complain of the atheistical opposition he had met with. So they have profited by the opportunity to silence him for a time. They cannot do much to him, and a few weeks' confinement with insufficient fringing, is a somewhat more merciful punishment for godless heretics than the stake of former times. I only fear that it will make him more obstinate than ever."

"He is in the right of it!" cried Edwin as he sprang up with feverish excitement and paced the room from end to end. "They *will* have open war; they invite it themselves, and there will be no peace until it has been honestly fought out. How often have I not myself on this very spot, disputed with Franzel, maintaining that one should only dispute with those who are on the same side as oneself. And certain it is that we shall never spread truth by irritating folly and conceit. But at least one should not allow any interference with one's right to go one's own way, and though a great deal is said about

freedom of conscience in the modern state, yet when it comes to something more serious than talk, it is found to be nothing but freedom for a *certain few*, who seem to think that they have hired the public conscience. And we, filled with the prejudice that it is the place of the wiser to give way, we consent to all these unworthy makeshifts. In all important moments of our life we allow formula to be murmured which have no meaning for us; when a child is given to us, an alliance for life is entered into, or one we love is given back to earth, we allow the mouth of a stranger, whose every word we could dispute, to utter that which would weary if it did not disgust us. I have borne all this as thousands of others have done, and have said to myself, it is not worse than beginning letters with dear or signing yourself an obedient servant when you feel anything but affectionate or obedient; they are forms which can only be a *gêne* to those who see anything in them. But now I see how all this *laisser aller* will end. Instead of silencing this parson's palaver at the very beginning, I was absorbed in my own thoughts while he insulted Balder's poor dust. I heard nothing but the wind rustling in the dry branches until I was roused by our friend's defence of him. If he had not spoken I verily believe that I should have been stupid enough to let the zealot talk, just as when I once undertook the office of godfather, I am ashamed to say I answered 'yes,' when asked whether I would help to bring up the child in the faith of Jesus Christ, that He descended into hell, and rose from the dead on the third day. And now our poor champion is paying for all our cowardice and false shame; which has hitherto prevented our breaking altogether with antiquated abuses. No, I will go, I will explain to these gentlemen—"

"You will be so kind as to leave yourself in my hands," said Marquard quietly, holding back his excited

friend by the arm. "As for our scape-goat, I hope he will very soon be set at liberty. I have means of getting at all sorts of persons, and though the influential classes *may* make a great deal of what is in fact a lie, *i. e.* of a state religion, and of a national church on the English pattern; yet they cannot quite lose the fear of free thought, and they would be the last to meddle with compromises and makeshifts as long as they can be useful. But now you will go for an hour's walk with Mohr, and let your conversation be as unintellectual as possible; later on—"

He was interrupted by the old maidservant bringing a letter. A bright red covered Edwin's pale cheeks when he saw the writing.

"Excuse my just looking at this," he said.

He walked to the window, where they heard him laugh aloud.

"Good news?" inquired Mohr, playing absently with the leaves of the palm-tree.

"Excellent! and just at the right moment. I will set off to-day; for you are right, Fritz—the air here does not agree with me. I must only beg of you, Heinrich, to carry my farewells to the little house on the lagoon and to the Frau Professorin. I—whether I shall again set foot in the tub, or whether I shall give one of you the trouble of sending my goods after me, well—in either case I will write as soon as I know how things look there, and whether I take up my abode there at once. And now—you will of course excuse me; the train goes in two hours; I have still some arrangements to make."

"We must yield to necessity," said Marquard drily; "and I refrain the rather from farewell ceremonials that I am convinced this is nothing but talk; we shall hardly get rid of you so easily."

He was not mistaken. Two hours later Edwin was still sitting at the table, staring at the letter which lay open before him, and having made no preparations

for his journey. It was as if he expected to find some other meaning between the lines than the one really expressed by the words, which ran as follows :

“ MY DEAR FRIEND,

“ The time is up, the three days are past, and I have not seen you again. I hardly could hope that all I begged your brother to tell you from me—give him my kindest regards (I envy you the happiness of having such a brother)—that indeed anything I could say, would influence you, as I can retract nothing I have already said, or deceive either you or myself.

“ I am now entirely without either the will or the means to live. You know that in my case these are almost one and the same thing ; I cannot understand how any one can continue to love his life after having lost everything that could make life possible. And yet—I must suffer even more than I do now ; both my physical and spiritual hunger must be keener than it is before I can bring myself to the *last step of all*. For the present it is only a dull pain, and then I feel a hope from time to time that it will not last for ever. So I am thinking of trying whether things might not be better with me if I had a complete change of circumstances. The old countess has invited me to spend a little time in her castle ; she has come herself to fetch me, and though I do not take to her much, I have no reason to be particular.

“ When you read these words I shall have already started.

“ I can hardly ask you to write to me. But unless you prefer to forget me, pity me rather than condemn me. I shall never cease to think of you.

“ TOINETTE.”

In the afternoon, when the kind-hearted Madame Feyertag visited him to cheer him in his solitude, and to inquire whether he needed anything, he seemed

quite composed, spoke of his intended journey, thanked her for the kindness she had shown to Balder, and made all kinds of arrangements in case he should have to enter his professorship at once. He ate of the dishes which were brought up, but could not make up his mind to go out; and the portmanteau which he had sent for from the garret remained unpacked.

Old Lore saw him walking about in his room till very late, his light was not extinguished till midnight. When Marquard came in the morning he was not in the least surprised to learn that the doctor had not started.

“He is suffering from a nervous attack—what we call loss of will; it is a difficult thing to touch, but I think when we have once got him off—”

Up-stairs at the door of the room he was much startled to hear Edwin talking in a loud strange tone. On entering he found his friend sitting up in bed, his eyes wide open, with the little bottle of violet essence and with Lea's plate on his lap, striking them one against the other as if they had been a tambourine and a drum-stick. He did not recognize Marquard, but continued his discordant music, which he accompanied with a wild delirious babble, and every now and then with a verse of Italian poetry—apparently from Dante. On the table lay open a little copy of the ‘*Divina Commedia*,’ by the side of it Toinette's letter, the wrong side of which was covered with Edwin's small handwriting. He had probably done this the evening before, just before the fever came to its height, and the doctor was astonished to read an improvization in the metre of the ‘*Inferno*,’ which had probably been running in the sick man's head. Balder had always said of his brother that he was naturally a poet, but since he was grown up Edwin had never been caught in the act, and when quite himself would certainly not have fallen a victim to this attack of terza-rima fever. But as it often happens in dreams, or in a state of

somnambulism, that one shows the greatest skill in doing something in which one is by no means an adept, these verses were written down without alteration or correction, as if to dictation; and as their pessimist tone was in many respects a contradiction of Edwin's usual way of thinking, and as the cynical excitement of the composition was strange to his nature, they struck Marquard as being like the record of a man's talk whose soul is possessed by a demon, so that he is obliged to repeat the words put into his mouth by the latter, as if he had no will of his own.

The verses were as follows :

"Methinks my schooling I have quite outgrown,
My studies are complete. Some man of learning
May test my powers, and see what seeds are sown.

Then pray begin—and pray you be discerning ;
My worthless wisdom is immense, you know,
And proudly to parade it I am burning.

'Existence—what is that?'—We do not know.

'And what its end?'—Dim light to darkness groweth.

'Declare its use.'—To teach us to forego.

'But say then what is God?'—God only knoweth.

'What meaneth joy?'—The absence of all grieving.

'What meaneth grief?'—That joy no longer gloweth.

'In negatives alone thou art believing,
To positives thy mind inclineth less ;
Thus insecure, to two seats thou art cleaving.'

Well, then, my childhood's masters trained to *guess*
This truth, which in the upper school I've *learned* :
The nut we have to crack is kernelless.

We seize it ere our nurse's back is turned,
We crack it soon or late—to find, dismayed,
The charm of toil the guerdon we have earned.

Our longing after knowledge still unstayed,
We gnaw the shells with greedy haste, and madly
Believe our hunger thus may be allayed.

What though we cheat our appetite so sadly,
Sweet sleep affords oblivious ecstasy,
And we forget that we have fared so badly.

But none is truly satisfied save he
Who never questioneth. The shells he eateth
For nuts, and taketh fools wise men to be.

He hopeth, when stern death at last he meeteth,
His path will lead to glory all-pervading,
And Heav'n's fair day by faith he inly greeteth,
As earth's pale sunshine from his life is fading.
Poor idle dreamer ! True, when school is o'er
Vacation comes, with sports the hours o'er-lading.

And then a train of those well coached before
To college life pass on, which fosters duly
The longings poet souls have felt of yore.

Released from discipline and flesh unruly,
We enter on this college life, to find
How dull equality degrades us truly.

No healthy strivings here of mind with mind ;
The senior and the fag have equal praises—
To be nor great nor small we live resigned.

To end like this had thought its many phases,
Its aspirations ? Oh, poor fools unthinking,
Who deem this dreary change to Heav'n upraises.

To me, no transport from th' illusion drinking,
It seems a fever'd dream of noble Pan,
When in unhealthy sleep his brain was sinking.

Dixi !—'Thou art a studious, thoughtful man ;
But immature is what thy mind conceives ;
Not yet thou graspest Nature's mighty plan.'

Not yet ? Still must I turn and turn the page,
To find still only what I knew of yore ?
I'm sick of this dull, dreary, school-boy stage.

'Tis hard to munch once more and yet once more,
Though head and palate gladly would refuse it,
The pap we have digested long before.

'Yet stay, thou must thy learning prize, and use it
To carry through some stiff examination
Thy chums who have no wit or who abuse it.

Why dost thou frown with anger and vexation ?
Thou wilt find ample leisure, if thou carest,
For making verses and for speculation,

And cutting on the desks the name thou bearest.'"

CHAPTER VI.

SENSITIVE people are apt to call the union of soul and body a *mésalliance*. And yet good and bad days might teach them better, might show them that whatever one's opinion may be as to the difference of their origin, yet the earth-born part of us is certainly not inferior to the other (which ought to be the master) in conscientious fulfilment of all its duties. How long would the soul succeed in enjoying by itself the feeling of happiness, if its faithful partner did not come to its assistance with all its senses; to say nothing of the enjoyment of the pleasures which even for the most intellectual of us have their origin in these very senses; and if in the pure ether of intellectual happiness we are forced to tremble at our likeness to gods, how much more should we be terrified at our likeness to worms, if the body did not again come to our assistance, and, as soon as our distress is at its height, transport the struggle into the province of the senses, at the same time absolving the soul from its defence of a forlorn hope, till it has been supplied with new weapons and with new strength with which to carry on the combat!

And so the severe illness which now attacked Edwin took pity on his soul, which had been so sorely shaken. For weeks he lay unconscious in a burning nervous

fever. He recognized none of those who watched by him, neither Franzelius, who had been set at liberty after an impressive warning to mind what he was about, and who now passed his nights regularly in the "tub," sometimes getting a little sleep towards midnight on Balder's bed when his patient grew quieter, nor the faithful Mohr, who took his part of the watching by day, and when there was nothing particular to do, indulged in his one recreation of sitting at Balder's lathe and playing innumerable games of chess with himself. At first Marquard had been anxious to remove Edwin into the hospital, where he would have been able to devote more time and attention to his case; but neither his two other friends nor Madame Feyertag would hear of such a thing. And this good woman never regretted a minute, even when the illness lasted weeks and months, that she had kept the sick man under her roof. Her heart and her linen cupboard, her hands and those of her old maidservant, were always open and ready when needed.

"My good friend," said the Zaunkönig one day to the landlord, when he came, as was his daily custom, to inquire what the night had been like, "your theory of nature's flashes in the pan is being strikingly confuted, while the old wisdom of Solomon is being confirmed: that the price of a virtuous woman is far above rubies," and then he smiled quietly to himself and looked down at the crape on his white hat. The shoemaker shrugged his shoulders.

"The will is good," said he, "but the perception is as a rule remarkably weak. For instance, there is my daughter Reginchen!—Pshaw! I will not praise her, though in respect to her being a "flash in the pan" Schopenhauer is right again. God knows where she gets it from; there was nothing very flashing about her mother when she was young. But as for her power of perception, Herr König, I defy any man to understand it. You know that she is engaged to Herr

Franzelius; at first did not she seem as though she would throw herself into the water rather than not have him? As far as he goes, he is a most respectable fellow, and if he would only break himself of his radical tricks he would have quite wherewithal to live; for one cannot deny that he has both education and what you call character, and with the few groschen which she will bring him they could settle and start a printing establishment. Pshaw! with that one girl of mine, Herr König, I am quite foolish both as a father and a man of humanity. But now only think, since the death of the young gentleman up-stairs the stupid thing wears black as if it had been her own brother, and there is an end of all her bride's frippery. Only in the evening, when he comes, they press hands and hang their heads for ten minutes like two weeping willows, and the whole of the rest of the day she sits and reads Schiller's poems, and when I ask how her trousseau is getting on she says, 'Oh, there is time enough for that, father.' Yes, yes, Herr König, as I say, the will is all right, for it is still her will to have him; but what can her perception be about that she has suddenly taken to Schiller, when she should be much more interested in her house linen—if I have a notion what it all means, let me never more know the difference between ox and calf-skin. By-the-bye, how about your young lady? It is ages since I have had the honour—"

The little painter, who had been listening with evident sympathy, was so troubled by this question that he could only answer with a heavy sigh. Then he said:

"Our Heavenly Father often lays heavy trials on His children, Herr Feyertag. He loaded me a long time with benefits; I was happy in my home and in my art, and I have taken good care that all these mercies should not render me presumptuous. Even when I became court-painter, I examined my own heart, and rooted out every grain of pride. For after

all, there are many more deserving and cleverer than I am, and they are nowhere in the race; while I with my modest specialty— But now I have indeed been chastened through that which is dearest to me. My Lea is fading away; no one knows what is to be done, and Dr. Marquard only says that at a more genial season, if indeed a journey were possible—but not now in February. Who knows what we shall be doing in April or in May. Oh; my good friend, I have comforted myself all my life with the thought that God chastens us because He loves us; but if I had to go through *that*—”

He broke off suddenly, and without leaving a polite message for Madame Feyertag, as was his custom, he hastily left the shop.

At this time Edwin had been out of danger for some weeks, and even a relapse was no longer to be feared. Physically he improved visibly; but his intellectual clearness and freshness returned with incredible slowness. He could sit for hours at the window with a cheerful face without desiring the least amusement or occupation. Only when there was a return of fine weather before the real commencement of spring, and it was possible to drive out in the morning sun, did the mist which seemed to shroud his intellect disperse somewhat. His memory was the slowest to grow strong. When it was a question of events which had happened during the month before Balder's death, he had great difficulty in reuniting the threads which had been broken.

Even when it became no longer necessary, Franzelius continued to sleep in the tub. Edwin had begged him to do so, because he felt how much the faithful fellow had it at heart to fulfil in this way his promise to Balder. Indeed he was glad himself, after being alone the whole day (for Mohr had lately retired into solitude), to see this true friendly face, and to await sleep in the midst of quiet conversation. He had other

visitors besides. The little painter came, and the Professorin, who, as far as Madame Feyertag's jealousy would allow it, had aided the recovery by means of syrups, strengthening drinks, and all sorts of nourishing food. But the more the invalid increased in strength the more was he left to himself, whereat he seemed perfectly satisfied. It was a long time since he had learnt that the professorship which had been offered to him had in the mean time been given to another. Edwin had seen it in a newspaper, and had accepted the wreck of his hopes with great indifference. What did he now care about a *carrière*? He rejoiced in feeling strong enough to think of new work, and read eagerly everything of importance that had appeared in the mean time.

Toinette's name never passed his lips. But once he asked Marquard whether he had not seen a letter which he had received just before he fell ill, and which he had not been able to find anywhere.

"Probably the maid used it long ago for lighting the fire," observed Marquard drily. "Was it anything of importance?" He meant to return the fatal letter, which he had carefully laid in a place of safety, only when there could no longer be any danger of the old wound breaking out anew.

But indeed there seemed no longer to be any danger of this. One day when Marquard looked in upon him Edwin showed him, with an air of perfect calmness, a note which he had received an hour before, and at the sight of which his friend could hardly conceal his alarm.

"It turns out to be true," said Edwin with a smile, but reddening slightly. "I thought at once that the bird would hardly escape the limed twig. Well, may her gilded cage be spacious enough for her to fancy herself at liberty!"

"May I read it?" inquired Marquard.

"Certainly. Unfortunately she and I never had

any secrets. And you have always known her as you will find her in this."

The letter was as follows :

"You discarded me so suddenly, my dear friend, that if I were susceptible I should remain silent. But as from the very beginning I was quite as much in earnest in my sincere friendship for you, as you were in your unfortunate love for me, my feeling for you is more lasting, as well as more unselfish, more considerate. I should not like you to hear by chance in the newspaper that your poor duchess has decided on a *mésalliance*, and that in a few days she will style herself Countess. Why have I decided thus? If your philosophy cannot furnish you with an answer, do not expect one from a poor fool who is desperate. Why indeed is one in the world? Perhaps it is only curiosity, and the hope of discovering the reason, which have led me to take this step, of which you will doubtless disapprove. Believe me it is only a preparatory exercise for the last great step—the step into nothing. Moreover, I am not untrue to myself. I have told him everything, and that I do not love him at all. But as he is more easily satisfied than some people, and requires nothing of me which I cannot give, I think I shall manage to get on with him. Not so with you. I feel it as I write this letter, which has apparently no end. But things must be as they are. How absurd is the fate of some people. Do you not agree, my dear friend?

"In spite of everything your sincere friend,

"TOINETTE."

"P.S. Little Jean sends you his respects. If only for his sake I was obliged to make up my mind to marry the count. He would have been miserable for life had he not been able to don the latter's livery, which is green embroidered with silver, and which

gives him the appearance of a respectable finch in Sunday clothes.

"All the same, I wish——"

This last line was crossed out, but the words were still legible. Marquard laid the letter on the table without a word.

"What do you say to it?" asked Edwin as he slowly replaced the letter in the envelope.

"Nothing; I have long given up pronouncing any opinion on the innumerable varieties of the species 'woman.' I hate unscientific talk, and therefore in each particular case I try to discover its practical side. When convenient to yourself, I should like to hear what *you* have to say in the matter. The case has from the beginning had more than a theoretical interest for you."

"I will tell you as soon as I have found the right formula. Till now I have felt nothing but astonishment. I cannot even think."

"Astonishment at her decision? Well, I did think——"

"No; at the effect upon myself. Will you believe it, that I have read this letter with no more emotion than if it was to inform me that Raphael's Madonna had been carried from Dresden to Munich? It would seem as if my illness had exhausted my old blood, and that with it the spell had been broken. Countess Toinette—I can say that with the same composure as Reginchen Franzelius."

Marquard looked him straight in the face with great imperturbability and exclaimed, "Bravo!" you shall have a red ticket with the words "Dismissed—cured." Well, to-day you must take a little walk, and then dine; but about that I will consult with Madame Feyertag."

He shook him by the hand, with the temperature of which he did not seem quite satisfied, and went

away. On the stairs he met Mohr. "Be good enough to watch him closely to-day and not to leave him alone for any length of time," he whispered hastily. "His old flame has accepted the count—he declares that it does not affect him. But this idealist is not to be trusted. Warn Franzelius when he comes for the night. I will look in again to-morrow."

But this time this clever doctor of body and soul was really mistaken. When he returned the following morning he found his patient looking fresher and clearer and with a capital pulse. He asked about the walk of the previous day, which in the bright March sun had been the first thing to give Edwin real confidence in the renewal of his strength.

"To-day with your permission I will pay a visit," said he; "I should like to see my little friend and patron in the Venetian palace. It is a week since he came to the tub. Does that mean that the child of God will do no more than play the good Samaritan to the child of this world?"

"You are quite mistaken," returned Marquard with unusual gravity. "Our Zaunkönig stays in his nest to look after his offspring, which is in a bad way."

"Lea? Ill? and for some time? Why was I never told before?"

"Why talk of one patient to another? I only wish I saw my way there as clearly as I do here; but in certain cases one is reminded very unpleasantly of one's limited powers?"

"You do not know what to make of her illness?"

"I know only too well. I know that the seat of the evil is in her mind. Indeed I could trust myself to touch the spot with the point of a needle. But what would that serve if the specific, with which I am *also* acquainted, is not to be procured at any chemist's?"

"An illness of the mind?"

"No; a simple fever which is consuming her, though her mind is perfectly clear. In short—

'Angels say that with them it doth dwell,
Devils call it the torture of hell,
Mankind calleth it *love* !' "

"Love? The poor girl—"

"Is in love, and her life is in danger. Oh, my dear fellow, these still waters !"

"And who in all the world— But what I know of her precludes the possibility of her having confessed to you, or indeed to any living soul."

"The real family physician needs no auricular confession in these cases. We have other means of sounding a feverish heart—means which are apparent to nobody. At the beginning I confess I was on a totally wrong track. I imagined—this is of course *entre nous*—for a whole week that I was the happy object and cause of her secret pains. After all it would not have shown such very bad taste on her part, and the romantic occasion of our first acquaintance on that night on which we drew our pianiste from the water, who need have been surprised at her beginning by reverencing me as a saving angel, then going on to admiration, and ending with love? And I confess that the mere thought cost me a few sleepless nights—up to midnight. You know what I think of love and marriage. But my most sacred prejudices ran the risk of being upset by the thought that one such as this Zaunkönig's daughter wished to accept me as her wedded husband. She has something about her which would make it difficult, nay, impossible, for a proper man to be untrue to her. That I myself was deeply in love with her during that week is not saying much. I am as good a conductor of heat as an iron stove, and there was no lack of heating power in the situation. Daily under pretext of watching her case I spent an hour with her, for the most part alone; added to which just at that time I had quarrelled with my little wild nightingale. Adeline had raved rather too much to me about a handsome Hungarian. I

therefore took advantage of my heart's holiday to make studies on the banks of the lagoon to see whether I could not transform myself from an adorer of women in the plural number to an adorer of one in particular."

"And in what did these studies consist?" broke in Edwin with a forced smile.

"That is *my* secret," replied Marquard pathetically. "Suffice it to say that I gave up the game, as I saw I could not win it. But now I began with the eagerness of jealousy to search for him who stood in my way, and my old sympathetic method did not play me false."

"May I inquire?"

"It is not my invention. It has already been made use of by one of my colleagues in old time. You know the story of the king's son who fell sick for love of his stepmother, and whose secret the family physician discovered as he happened to be feeling the prince's pulse at the moment when the queen entered the room. Well, I could not introduce into the room him whom I suspected, for just at that time he was not capable of paying visits. But his name, which I let fall apparently for no particular reason just when I had taken hold of the delicate wrist of the little Jewish Christian, had exactly the same effect. A sudden heightening of the pulse of forty beats in the minute. Naturally the case is of no particular interest for you," he continued, as Edwin remained silent gazing out of the window with averted face. "You have never had anything but the sympathy of a pedagogue with your pupil, no more than you would have with any other student. At that time you had been bitten by the serpent, and if the three graces in their official Olympian vestments had been offered to you on a waiter, you would have shut your eyes and have run after the ducal colours. But whether under the circumstances it is wise on your part to pay a visit to-day

in the Venetian palace you must decide for yourself, though it is true we recommend frost-bites to be rubbed with snow. But the heart of a woman is unfortunately rather more tender than the tough extremities. However, I thought I owed you the confession. Good-bye!" He gave his silent friend a slight tap on the shoulder and left him.

It would be impossible to describe in a few words the state in which Edwin remained behind. We can hardly venture to say whether joy or consternation predominated in his mingled sensations. The first extreme astonishment had been followed by a feeling of shame at having been so much astonished, almost of remorse, as if he had committed a crime; and yet he felt assured of his own innocence though he could not shake off the feeling of his ingratitude. It struck him now how selfish and unfeeling he had been never to have bestowed even a thought of friendly acknowledgment on the various almost imperceptible signs of this most unselfish feeling for him! Even to-day, when he had quite made up his mind to see her again, he had thought more of her father, feeling that to him he had a duty to perform; and now he learnt that on his going or on his staying away depended the weal or woe of this young life. He closed his eyes and recalled all the scenes in which she had played any part—from their first meeting in the little house, to the evening when she had stood by Balder's catafalque and had gazed at the silent face with a look of the deepest grief. He saw her so distinctly that he could have drawn her line for line: the beautifully-formed eyelids which had struck him at the very beginning, because she moved them so little that it seemed as if her eyes had more power than is usual to bear the light without winking; also the delicate, sharply-marked eyebrows, which when in thought she drew together,—her father used to tease her by saying that her forehead was like a white sheet of paper written

on in cipher, under which her brows contracted as if they had been two large notes of interrogation,—all this was before him; the way in which she used to bow her head when it was difficult to her to grasp what he was explaining to her, and the curiously sudden way she had of raising it as soon as ever she understood, triumphant and yet as if challenging him to put something new and more difficult before her. And she loved him, and he had never suspected it during all these months! He took the plate which she had painted for him from his desk, where he had laid all sorts of writing materials on it, and contemplated it as if for the first time. He mechanically breathed on it and rubbed it bright with his handkerchief. It was as if he believed that she might have written in cipher between the ears of corn and the cornflowers, and that if he could discover the writing it would betray to him all that had passed through her mind while she was painting.

Suddenly it struck him that there was an easier way than that. That manuscript which her father had told him contained the summary of what he had taught her!—the blood rushed to his face when he recollected that it still lay unopened in his desk. And yet—of what interest could it have been to him then, when his lessons were to be discontinued, to see whether his pupil had rightly understood each of his words? But now this pledge with which he had been entrusted seemed to become of the highest value, as it was a proof of her desire that he should learn to know her intimately; and besides, how could he tell whether she had not wished to confess to him between the lines that which had remained so long silent and unanswered?

As if to make up for lost time, he drew out the packet and tore off its covering. There appeared a thick manuscript book, looking like the diary of a school-girl, on the cover of which was in fact written

"Journal." A slight arabesque had been drawn round the word with a pen, and when he came to turn over the leaves, he found in the margin many traces that the writer, before making up her mind to write down her thoughts, had been in the habit of playing dreamily with her pen, and producing an entanglement of flowers and figures.

It contained indeed much more than notes on his lectures. The first entries were dated three or four years before the commencement of her acquaintance with Edwin, and contained all the secrets of her young life—everything in the way of doubt and questions of conscience which since the awakening of her heart into a woman's had risen up to trouble her. There was scarcely an allusion to outward events; but from their effect on her mind it was clear that even this quiet, most monotonous life had had its storms. However, instead of describing the tone and contents of the manuscript, it may be as well to introduce a few quotations from it while Edwin remains for hours absorbed in its perusal; it will give a sort of general idea of the soliloquy, which, with frequent interruptions, this young earnest soul had had with itself.

CHAPTER VII.

From Lea's Journal.

SINCE I burnt the old books in which I had given so strict an account of all my inward struggles before and after confirmation I have had a horror of all writing. But is not this like a man who, having had the small-pox, looks at himself in a mirror, and would like to break the innocent glass which shows him his face as it is? I rather wish I had not burnt those diaries; they contained, it is true, the history of a disease; but need one be ashamed of catching a fever in which one's mind wanders in uneasy dreams?

And that which befell me—I am very much mistaken if many escape this disease as they are growing up, and the few who do, only because their nature is too weak or their blood too sluggish. And yet, if I remember right, it was not shame at having to suffer such childish agonies in order to arrive at the truth which led me to destroy what I had written—it was rather gnawing remorse that I could see so clearly and yet be wanting in the courage to stand up and avow my convictions. I had not even the excuse of feeling, while my lips repeated the creed, that my sceptical mind was still full of doubts, and that my objection to it all was still vague and dark. I knew

perfectly well that I was repeating a lie; my own secret confessions, black upon white, gave the lie to the outward confession in the church; and in destroying this silent witness I added a second act of cowardice to the first, as if by doing so I could suppress my own consciousness!—

I can feel now the icy shudder which ran through me when I heard sounding loudly through the church the dogmas one after another which my stupid head had been trying in vain to grasp for the last many months, and to each a voice in me cried "No," and again no! and then after all "Yes" came from my lips, and I felt suddenly as if I had lost my soul, as if I had openly and solemnly renounced my own nature. It was as if I had myself denied my own existence, as if I had let that which is strange to me pass over my own familiar self. Oh, how ashamed, how stunned I felt when I went home and had to receive everybody's congratulations on what was really a disgrace to me! For months I could not look myself in the face, so deeply had I fallen in my own estimation. At that time I could think of no excuse for myself. I was timid; I was only sixteen. I knew the horror which would have thrilled through the sacred place if I had told the truth, but none of this seemed any palliation: I never even thought of that which had really turned the scale, of the grief which such an unheard-of step would have caused to my dear father. I only heard my own voice professing belief in a doctrine which was strange to my heart; which I had disputed so clearly with myself, and which I had so entirely rejected, and had nevertheless now acknowledged to be the substance of my deepest thought and feeling. It was like a perjury on my conscience! And I burned the book. Why have I now begun a new one? What have I to say to myself? Alas! I have grown dumb because the sound of my own thoughts frightened me, and in consequence my thoughts have become

untrue to me; nature, the world, my own heart are closed to me. There is nobody to whom I can speak of what is really my own self. My father would be terrified if he were to see my soul on the edge of such deep abysses or climbing to such solitary heights. Aunt Valentin speaks another language, and besides them, all who come to the house think me a strange girl, not over amiable, and far from attractive. However, it does not matter. Silence is in reality the better part; but I must not lose the habit of talking with myself. I will try it again.

I have always been at peace with myself, except on that one terrible occasion.

And then—at last I see it quite clearly—the immoral custom was to blame which, just when we are beginning to have a notion of the value of words, to feel the difficulty of the world problem, the depth of life's abysses, presents us with a few answers to the most unfathomable mysteries, tells us to learn them by heart and to be satisfied. It is cruel to oblige us either thoughtlessly to get rid of all doubt on the word of an excellent man, to whom, by reason of his office, doubt is forbidden, or to have the unheard-of courage to stand up before a whole congregation and lay bare one's inmost soul with its hidden life!

All the objections which I raised during my course of preparation were successfully refuted with the usual theological self-sufficiency and infallibility which allows of no discussion, because every doubt on the poor groper's part is made an affair of conscience. Nothing is really explained, but one is told that one must ask God for the true faith, which He will at once bestow. Might they not just as well, when I am hungry and ask for bread, offer me an opiate so that I may forget my necessities and dream of well-filled dishes? My thoughts trouble me, and in order to escape from them shall I pay for thoughtlessness?

It makes them happy, and they wish every one else

to be happy in the same way. As if one food could satisfy and nourish all alike!

May 10th.

Have been out with Aunt Valentin, made numerous purchases. At the same time she profited by the opportunity to make an effort for my poor soul which I thought she had already given up as hopeless. But she really loves me, and is therefore never weary of drawing my attention to that which constitutes her own happiness. I answered very little. The streets were full of noise and bustle. For a long time past I had not felt so clear and happy; why should I spoil the beautiful sunshine with disputing and defending myself? only at last, when we came in sight of our little house again, I remarked, in order that she should not indulge in false hopes, that I certainly needed redemption and often yearned for it with painful longing. But how could I go to a Saviour who did not answer my questions, who knew nothing of my gloomy state of mind, of my tormenting thoughts, but who stood before me as a sinless, perfect God-man? That the mystical deed of the death of a Divine Redeemer for erring humanity had always been quite dark to me. In His teaching I had found a few beautiful rays of His nature which had warmed me; but that I needed not only warming, but illuminating, that my soul had other needs besides those of my heart (about which, by-the-bye, I am always clear)—needs which the Catechism could not satisfy—to which, whether they be superfluous or even wrong—I can find no answer. My dear father, who was just going out, met us, and cut my aunt short in her answer. Theology is never discussed before him; he has solemnly forbidden it. His relation to God and to all “that is not of the world” is so completely part of himself that, as he says, it is like a second health to him. If one talks about it, it is a sign that one is more or less ill, as otherwise one

does not feel it. I envy him his cheerful conviction of his constant intercourse with his God, who is as present to him as if he could see Him with his eyes and touch Him with his hands. I, on the contrary, feel always alone—alone with my human heart, my human thoughts. My aunt calls me godless; I call myself God-forsaken. But is it my fault that it is so? Have I not sought Him with tears, and as the time approached when I was to confess Him publicly in sheer despair? And He was not to be found!

In the evening.

I have had a piece of work to finish, a vase for a wedding present—roses and sprays of myrtle, with a monogram of the two names in the centre. I can quite understand my father being so happy in his God. He has a much more humble heart, his art satisfies him, while I am ashamed of my half-talent. It is an affair of temperament. What an impossible thought that one should wish (nay, pray) to shut one's eyes to one's own deficiencies, to be contented with what is insignificant! Without murmuring, yes; one must accept what cannot be altered, but to falsify one's own judgment for the sake of what is called content—it frightens me as if it were a crime. Perhaps if I had great talent, or some high important work to fill up my life, perhaps then I should give up dreaming of what is inscrutable. He who has work to do in which he himself believes, will perhaps in time lose the painful curiosity about all the created things which surround him. He knows, or imagines he knows, why he lives, each day seems to prove it to him; I, on the contrary,—if I were not necessary to my father—

Two days later.

The day before yesterday I gave up writing because I felt a sudden impulse to read the New Testament. I

had not opened it again since the numerous incomprehensible, threatening, damning passages which it contains had first begun to repel me and throw me back upon myself. Now that I have lost my childish fear of it as the voice of an infallible spirit, now that I see in it the history of one of the noblest and most remarkable of men, I can find much that is of real comfort to me, and yet the whole tone is very depressing. Have we human beings anything more lovely, more comforting than *joy*—joy in beauty, in goodness, in the brightness of this world? And while we are reading the Bible we seem always to be walking in the twilight of expectation and hope; eternity is never reached, it is only to commence when we have fought our way through time; the light of gladness never really shines forth, there is no merriment, no laughter—the happiness of this world is vanity—a future is held up to us which makes the present time worthless, and we are taught to look with suspicion upon the highest earthly bliss, that of pure, deep, loving meditation, because the kingdom of heaven is only for those who are poor in spirit. I am poor in spirit, but it makes me miserable to feel it, and to feel at the same time that if I could break through this limitation I should no longer be the same person, and therefore should not even be conscious of my redemption. For what transcends me is no longer my own.

And then that this gentle Divine man should, in order to belong to the whole of humanity, turn with such strange harshness from His own family, so that He no longer had any family—no doubt it was a necessity, but it seems to chill me. All the other greatness which I have learnt to love has been familiar, cheerful, and though surrounded with majesty, has been connected by the threads of human needs with my being. When I read Goethe's letters, of the narrowness of Schiller's home, of Luther and his family, or even go still further back to Socrates and

his bad wife, I always feel the breath of mother earth out of which have grown the plants of their spirit, and which also bears and nourishes my lesser one. But the spirit which is not of this world troubles me, makes me feel uncomfortable, and I am without the faith which might excuse this feeling—the faith that with a God it could not be otherwise.

I have often wished to be very witty. I thought that witty people must be very happy, because I supposed that with a sudden spring of fancy they are able to jump over all sorts of abysses of doubt, on the edge of which those who are only capable of slow meditation, to whom no brilliant inspiration can suddenly give wings, must stand, looking hesitatingly at the other side. But then, on the other hand, for no applause, whether from others or myself,—for I thoroughly appreciate wit,—would I give up the honest effort which may perhaps advance slowly or may never even reach the goal. That is *my* religion, as I have no other, and wit and religion are clearly not compatible. Our little bit of life would certainly not be worth having if it were not for the feeling that one is quietly and honestly interested, nay, absorbed, in the riddle of life.

July.

I have given myself up in earnest to my studies of nature, and I think that these busy months, which have filled my portfolios, have been really of use to me; for I believe I am at last on the point of realizing and reproducing things from my own point of view, and that I have got rid of what I had merely learnt, which was never satisfactory to me.

Of course my journal has been rather neglected. I have painted till I lost not only the power of hearing and seeing, but even of thinking. If devotion to nature and art could satisfy me, the last few months ought

to have been exactly what I could have wished—that is to say, I have wished for nothing.

Aunt Valentin has brought a young man to the house of whom she thinks a great deal, a painter belonging to the Nazarene School; he is not without talent nor unamiable, but in spite of his having a head like a St. John, as my aunt describes him, he will not be very dangerous to me.

August 2nd.

When I think of belonging to a man it frightens me, though I have the greatest need of loving, of giving away my heart, in the depths of which lies concealed much which, if once set free, will some day burst forth like a hidden hot spring. But I know that I shall only be able to surrender my whole life in real truth to one who is what I have in vain sought for in books—my redeemer; he must be so superior to me in strength, goodness, and clearness that he will always have something to give, however often I may ask. To give is said to be more blessed than to receive. But it seems to me that in marriage, if a wife gives her all, she ought to receive in return more than her all. It may be that all these dreams are nothing but webs spun in the head of an idle girl, and that in real truth no such dissolving of two into one is possible. At all events, my own parents, who were nevertheless an exemplary pair,—my aunt and all other happy marriages which I have had the opportunity of observing,—do not come up to this ideal. However, it will be time enough to lower my standard when I am obliged.

August 3rd.

My aunt has now spoken openly to me about N—. She says that he has great esteem and affection for me, and that he should consider himself very happy if he could win my love and make me his wife. I have seen it coming, and could answer with perfect composure,

for I do not return his feelings. He my redeemer ! who has not the slightest notion what I am really like, and who would not understand if I were to tell him everything ! “ Our natures are too thoroughly different,” I said quietly. “ He deceives himself if he thinks that I could make him happy.” My aunt combated this with great animation. He knows that I am not a Christian, and that is the very thing which turned the scale ; he now feels how much he has to give me, otherwise his modesty would have held him back. We had a long discussion, as to whether two people might not venture on marriage in spite of a wide dissimilarity in their faith ; there was the possibility of conversion, of their coming at last to an understanding. She believes in this because she wishes it ! This reason for belief fails me entirely as I have no *wish* in the matter. A nature such as his, to which anything indefinite is a trouble, which seeks for peace at any price, even at the price of honesty,—I mean honesty towards oneself,—such a peace-loving soul would freeze to death in the mental storms which are my element. One needs courage to take up one’s position as sentry in such solitude without even knowing when one will be relieved, or whether indeed—

Wednesday the 6th, early.

I could not sleep last night for the heat. At last I got up and seated myself at the window, where countless stars looked in at me. Everything was so silent and peaceful, and yet at the same time so grand and wonderful, when suddenly I had a feeling as if I distinctly heard my own soul saying to me : No ; there is in this immeasurable infinitude no heart which feels the beating of yours, but there is therefore no cause for fear. We breathe and move and desire and see in obedience to eternal necessity, and even in the solitude of midnight we are not solitary ! And as I said

this to myself I heard close by my dear father's peaceful breathing, and I crept softly into his room. There he lay with such a loving smile in his sleep that I involuntarily knelt down and kissed his hand gently without disturbing him. Then I lay down again and slept more sweetly than I have ever done before.

Formerly when it struck me that that which they call God is merely an image which man has imagined, a superstitious terror used each time to make me shudder, as if I should somehow or other be punished for my audacity. But if a conscious, all-embracing being really does bear the world in His arms, it is childish to believe that our doubts or our want of comprehension could anger or offend Him, as an earthly king might take it amiss if a sentry did not salute him. Through the childish games and little comedies which we daily see played with this Supreme Being, and in which we ourselves take part till we become serious, we have now by little and little got as far as this. In Catholic countries men think that they will offend this God of theirs, whom they call all-good, all-wise, if they pass a church without taking off their hat, or making the sign of the cross, and in many Protestant houses they will not satisfy their hunger without first inviting their Saviour to take His place at table. These are games for children, innocent, nay, even graceful, if only one did not, while occupying oneself with these little pious, symbolical acts, lose so easily the capability of realizing the vast height and depth of any conception of God which would be at all worthy of the vastness of the universe. But they imagine Him to be like themselves—an irritable, capricious being whom they can move with flattery, who cannot bear that a man should boast of any unusual good fortune at which he is delighted, but at once spoils the poor creature's fun if not pacified by an immediate request to desist; a being who, in addition to all His grand purposes relating to the universe,

is determined to let no sparrow fall from the roof unless it be for the best, to say nothing of a poor slater who leaves behind a destitute wife and children.

Well, they may fashion their domestic god as they will and as they are able. But why do they threaten with fire and sword, or at all events with angry words of damnation, all those who cannot see anything but contradiction between the sublime creation and a creator formed out of such human materials, who seek other compensation for the contradictions and riddles, the cruelties and horrors of life, than the rewards of another life? Why should a man, who troubles no one with his mistakes or his efforts to find the truth, not fight his way through for himself, instead of following the great high road, where by the light of the official lamps so much goes on and is approved which is repugnant to him?

Later.

My father has now, in his tender kind way, tried to find out from me what I think of N—r. I did not conceal my complete indifference, and I begged him to impart it to the poor man to put a stop to all illusion on his part. "You know," said I, "that I have always been a dreadfully obstinate child, and there is only one man who has had with me all the patience that I need—that one man is yourself; I should be a fool if I were to go away and leave you in order to quarrel with another who would not even listen to what I said, since he starts with the assumption that I am a lost sheep." He laughed, and said that he did not wish to give me away, that I must in fact run away of my own accord if he is to bear it, that he had only wanted to see what I really thought; the whole thing had appeared to him very improbable. I saw very well that it was really my aunt's doing; he can refuse her nothing. But with all his gentleness and kindness there is a point where he becomes

as firm as a rock, and we understand one another thoroughly; any one who is without true nobility, who has no greatness of soul, cannot really be anything to him, though he may have excellent qualities. And therefore—

What I wrote above yesterday has been strangely and quickly confirmed.

I was interrupted by my aunt, who also prevailed on my father to leave his work and to go and enjoy the beautiful weather in the Theirgarten. There was a charity concert at the Hofjäger. As I expected, we found N—r on our arrival there, and as there was a great crowd, he had kept places for us; so there we were seated in great comfort looking at the numerous elegant ladies and children who hovered around, and listening to a variety of overtures and dances, which, so far as my ear was concerned, failed in their salutary object. But the air was really like balm; the early rain had laid all the dust, and in the midst of the noise of the music such a peace and cheerfulness fell on me that I felt truly grateful to my aunt for having procured me this pleasure. She looked quite charming; it seems to me that she does not age in the least, and that, in spite of her severe dogmatical studies, there is something childlike and innocent in her face. My father also was in good spirits, and he looked quite elegant in his new coat, so that we felt bound to tease him; even N—r pleased me better than usual. His earnest modest face, among all the *blasé*, vapid, or frivolous ones about us, was like a human face among empty masks. Suddenly during a pause, we heard at a neighbouring table, where some officers were sitting, some loud talking concerning us, or rather myself. A very conceited-looking young lieutenant began to set forth in detail why he considered me pretty. I will not repeat what he said, but though he did not mean to be rude, it was very bad manners, especially

as it was followed by all sorts of impertinent jokes and stories, such as are "the thing" with frivolous young men. My father turned pale and looked at the professorin.

"We had better go away," said she; "this is intolerable."

"We ought to put a stop to it," replied my father, glancing at N—r.

"We had better avoid any dispute which might give offence," replied the latter, not venturing to raise his eyes. "Why should we not remain at peace, and let these children of the world mind their own business, it does not concern us?"

"Us?" said my father, rising. "I should have thought that as we are here sitting at one table, it would concern us all that any one should be rude to one of us. However, I will just see whether I cannot stop the mouths of these fellows."

"You mean to—" cried N—r in alarm.

But my father no longer heard him. He had advanced to the other table, had politely taken off his hat, and then said a few words, but in an undertone, so that I could not catch them; I was so excited that there was a buzzing in my ears. I only saw his dear, gentle, honest eyes shining with unusual brightness and his cheeks grow red; his face looked so firm and decided that even the haughty young officers looked quite small before him, and not one of them interrupted him. When he had finished he waited to see whether any of them had anything to say in reply; then, as they all remained silent, except that the hero of the affair stammered a few confused words, he smiled courteously and again took off his hat to the whole table. In the mean time the orchestra struck up again, and at the end of the piece our neighbours took their departure, touching their hats quite civilly to my dear chivalrous father, while the one who had talked did not venture even to look at me.

N—r looked deeply ashamed of himself, while my father behaved as though nothing had happened. But when afterwards we three were driving home together—my peaceful wooer had taken leave of us on some pretence or other—my father suddenly said to my aunt, that for the future it would be better if she were to desist from encouraging this estimable person from visiting at our house. "I know very well," he said, "that one should offer one's right cheek when one has received a blow on the left; but though I have always wished to find myself ready to forgive insults which were meant for me, so soon as they are meant for another, especially if that other be a lady, you must allow me to stand up for her, and consider him who has not the heart to do so a weak fool, with whom I would rather have no further dealings."

When at last we got home I fell on my dear noble father's neck and kissed him till he was quite out of breath and began to scold me; but all the time his eyes were full of tears of joy. We have had nothing more to say to one another about N—r, and I do not think I shall see him again.

How very little one's daily life brings which really speaks to one's heart! Sometimes I hardly feel this void at all. I feel as if I were surrounded by a mist which begins to disperse somewhat over my head, to be gilded with the first rays of sunshine, though the sun is as yet invisible to me. My mind is then filled with a delicious gentle suspense, as if in expectation of some happy event about to take place, which shall teach and illuminate me. But when I have waited and worked through another monotonous day, I go to rest with a heavy heart, while I think, supposing after all nothing should ever happen? What if your waiting and hoping be nothing but folly? For on our wishes we cannot found a claim to their fulfilment, nor derive any *rights* from our *longings*,—this I have long realized.

We all strive for perfection, and remain all the same in our imperfection. But that there should be so much that is of deep beauty, so much that would increase one's happiness, and which ought to be accessible even to me,—and yet I cannot reach it,—I cannot get near to it, the happiness which is possible to most is to me unattainable.

To-day I stopped for a long time before a book-seller's shop, where medical and philosophical works were lying in the window. If I had only enough money I would buy every book the title of which was in the least attractive to me, and I would read through them at random, as in the fairy story somebody ate through the mountain of pancakes, in the centre of which he found fabulous treasures. But the little that I earn by my painting—

Thinking this I found myself before our bookshelves, the contents of which I know already by heart. Besides, what I seek and need is not to be found in our great poets. Mechanically I took down a volume of Becker's universal history and read a bit of it. If I could only feel that there was any connection between myself and these wars, revolutions, and historical events which all happened so long ago! The betrothal of our pretty little neighbour, the daughter of our landlord, is at this moment of far greater importance to me than the marriage of Ninus with Semiramis, or the fact that Cleopatra had several husbands. Is it not much the same comedy under other names, in other countries, and with other costumes, about the wherefore of which we are none the wiser even when we have read all through these fourteen volumes?

Supposing though we were to be 'the wiser' for it all, would life then be bearable to us? Is not perhaps the fancy that by merely existing one is doing something

very important, very necessary, very useful—is not this dream perhaps the best thing we possess? At the theatre one tries to forget as far as is possible that the people behind the lamps are painted, and that it is to the prompter they are listening, not to the voice of their hearts. I can still remember how I used to feel as a child when I sat on the steps by the canal looking at the little bit that shone like gold in the narrow ray of sunlight which made its way between the high roofs. I never could help holding out my hand, under the impression that I should be able to take hold of the golden water. But it was just as thick and dirty as anywhere else in our lagoon. I had imagined or read somewhere that to him who knew the proper magic word it would not turn into common water, but would remain liquid gold.

Yes, indeed, if only one knew the right word!

What a good, loving father mine is—he is always thinking of me! To-day he has given me a pleasure such as I never had before. He has found a teacher for me, whom he brought here at once. The very first words which I exchanged with the Herr doctor convinced me that he is quite different from other people, and that he knows what I am in need of, and which I cannot find in books, and which hitherto I have asked of nobody.

If only I could describe the wonderful impression made on me by this man, and by our first conversation.

Here there was a sudden ending. The subsequent sheets, it was impossible to guess how many, seemed to have been cut out with a pair of scissors. All that had gone before had shown traces of excitement, had been written hurriedly from time to time; but now followed in clear distinct writing a formal exposition of Edwin's teaching. She had scarcely ever written down in his presence either a name or a date, so that

he was quite astonished at the certainty and clearness with which the real substance of his lessons was here presented to him. There was not one misunderstanding, but it was entirely in her own words, so that the greatest credit was not due to her memory. The peaceful flow of these thoughts was interrupted by no record of personal moods or experiences. Only now and then there was a line or mark of interrogation in the margin, or a casual sentence which proved that the intellect of the writer had in certain places not grasped the final meaning, but was obstinately struggling to get at it. "Why, it might be printed as it stands, as a history of philosophy for women!" cried Edwin, as he read the last line. "What a head! and I used to wonder what she was looking at with her great dreamy eyes. Her thoughts were perhaps more with her studies than were those of her master. It is a pity that it is all at an end! I should have liked to have seen how she would have managed further on. But here is some more writing." He had turned over the leaf, where he read as follows:

The most difficult thing in life seems to me to recognize which is the highest of two conflicting duties, and those to whom it is easiest must have I think not only the most happiness, but genius. If goodness were always quite simple, what could be more delightful than to be good always? It is, however, a sad thing when the understanding and the affections are at variance, when one has to stop and consider which of two courses is morally incumbent on one, and without always finding a solution; it is sad because it shakes one's faith in that which ought to be the surest of guides, namely, in one's own conscience; and let one choose what one will, it leaves in one's mind a sting, something to regret. We are all deeply convinced that it is our duty not to injure any one. It is just as much the law of the Gospel as our deepest

conviction which makes us feel that we cannot stand aloof from the suffering of the rest of the world, and which therefore bids each individual strive to lessen the universal misery by sparing his neighbours; and yet as each individual strives for perfection, for the complete growth and blossoming of his powers, he seldom succeeds without harming others; just as a tree in the middle of a wood can only have as much light and air as his fellow-trees will give up to him. Thus many a one pines and withers away consciously, knowing what his end must be, and yet without being able to move; and that when there is no question of injuring any one, when it is simply a prejudice which decides that it is not advisable to grow beyond a certain height and breadth, and that those who presume to do so, will be struck by lightning. Oh, why must—

(Here there were a few lines erased, and on the other side of the paper the following letter:)

I never imagined that these papers would ever leave my own hands, still less that you would ever cast your eyes upon them. But my father wishes that the lessons to which I owe so much, more than I can express, should not continue, that I should turn my thoughts for a time from all that formed the subject of your teaching. He has asked me to destroy this manuscript. But I cannot make up my mind to do that, and have therefore prevailed on him to allow me to give it up for the mean time into your keeping. And so what came out from you returns to you again. If you happen to cast your eyes over the first part I beg you not to smile at what I have written. For the future I must do without that which during the last few weeks has filled my whole mind and thoughts, and for which I can never sufficiently thank you! I *cannot* tell you what a grief it is to me, and yet I feel

that the only thanks I can offer you, Herr doctor, is to make it quite clear to you how much I am now deprived of. You would then perhaps realize how much you have given me, and that I have accepted everything, even that which was perhaps above me, with an honest heart aware of its own wants. One thing at least I must say, which is, that for the future I shall not trouble myself so much about the imperfection of my understanding and of my ideas as I have hitherto done, now that I know that real knowledge does exist, and that even an ignorant girl may, if she makes an effort and finds the right leader, at all events get far enough to understand the greatness of the task, and to exercise her own powers. Farewell, dear sir; I hope you will kindly accept the little souvenir which I am venturing to send you, and begging for indulgence,

I remain your truly grateful pupil,

L. K.

CHAPTER VIII.

It was noon before Edwin had turned the last page of these confessions. The maid had in the mean time brought his dinner, which had remained untouched on the table. Even now he sat for a long time motionless on his chair by the window with the manuscript on his knee, his hands crossed upon it, as if it had been a pan of charcoal, in the gentle heat of which he was warming himself.

When he did rise his eyes shone with strength and courage, as if this moment suddenly completed the slow work of his recovery. He stretched his arms towards the blue March sky and drew a deep breath, as if he felt himself strong enough to meet everything that might come.

"If only I could talk to Balder about it!" he said to himself. Then he carefully replaced the manuscript in his desk and went out into the town.

For the first time life appeared pleasant and easy to him; the busy movements of men were as delightful as the buzzing of a bee-hive in the height of summer; the faces which he met looked good and worthy of humanity. He stood still before the shop windows, went into a confectioner's, more to enjoy the look of the sweet things and of the people who were indulging in them than to partake of anything himself; then he

visited a few of his most intimate acquaintances, whose thresholds he had not crossed since the autumn. They all congratulated him, and said that he looked the younger for his illness. At last, when he was quite tired with walking, he thought of Marquard and how he would reproach him if he presumed too much on his strength, and going to Mohr's lodgings he would not be deterred from entering by the news that the latter was not at home. A wondrously joyful restlessness drove him to seek everything that was outside himself, both men and things; to occupy himself for a while with them for the sake of the secret pleasure which he enjoyed as he thought of the treasure hidden in his heart, just as in a time of peculiar happiness the joy with which a man is filled makes him dream all the night through, and as he passes from dream to dream wakes him up every now and then to recollect that he cannot lose that one true thought which is really his own.

Mohr did not return home. So when Edwin had rummaged long enough in his shelves, had examined all his books, and had struck a few minor chords on Christiane's piano, which Mohr had purchased at the sale of her effects, he made up his mind to return home. He was glad of the company of Franzelius, but said not one word of what was going on within him. Only seeing on his friend's honest face a sort of reproachful look at his cheerfulness, which indeed almost amounted to wild spirits, when Balder had been dead scarcely five months, he took his hand and said earnestly,

"Franzel, I know what you are thinking. But have patience for a bit. Signs and wonders are taking place, and a dry stick which seemed good for nothing but to be cut up for fire-wood is suddenly breaking forth into green branches. If only he had lived to see it, I verily believe that wonder and delight would have kept him alive; we might have had him with us still."

The following morning when he opened his eyes and saw the sunshine playing among the leaves of the palm-tree, a verse which he had read somewhere came into his head, and he repeated it softly aloud, as Franzelius had risen long before him and had gone to his printing business.

“How sweet it is to wake to morn’s first greeting,
When sleep was wooed with dreams of love o’ernight!
The heart is listening to its own wild beating
Before it graspeth all its bliss aright.
But soon the curtains spread by night are fleeting,
And quickly streameth in a flood of light—
’Tis she, the lov’d, the fairest one, appearing:
‘Good morning, love,’ she breathes with smile endearing.”

He sprang up and threw on his clothes. He now hesitated no longer, indeed he reproached himself for yesterday’s delay, which had been caused by the idea that night might bring other thoughts. If it had been proper to pay a visit, at nine o’clock in the morning he would certainly have rushed away without any breakfast. But as it was, he let another hour go by before he took his way in the beautiful spring sunshine to the *Schiff-bauer damm* and the lagoon.

“Whither are you hurrying at such a pace, Herr doctor?” were the words he suddenly heard behind him. “One needs the wings of the morning to catch you up.”

It was extremely irksome to him to be obliged to wait with a polite face till his acquaintance came up with him. And yet the latter was one whom as a rule he was not displeased to meet—a Livonian baron, whose large fortune enabled him to devote himself entirely to his taste for paintings, and by constantly travelling to extend and refine his judgment. He was of a gentle, easy-going nature, with which the kind of berserker rage into which false aims in art or fame dishonestly gained invariably threw him, was

in ludicrous contrast. Those who saw him slouching through the streets in his careless attire, with a broad-brimmed black hat cocked on his bald head, with his round eyes, which through constant seeking and spying stood out like those of a snail, as if they sought to touch all that they saw, would hardly have given him credit for the artistic refinement and enthusiasm for which Edwin esteemed him so highly.

But to-day nothing could be more inconvenient than this meeting. He excused his haste by saying that he was out on business, but he could not refuse the offered company, nor conceal the object of his walk.

When he mentioned the Zaunkönig's name the baron exclaimed, "*Cospetto di Bacco*," stood still, and seized Edwin by the coat. "Only listen, my dear fellow," he cried; "if this is not a special providence I can believe no longer in the finger of God. Do you know I was just going the very same way, and was feeling annoyed at having to go; now I rejoice that it is no longer necessary."

"Have you a message which I can take?"

"If you will be so kind; for that is just the miracle—you can do it ten times better than I can. But listen first, *di che si tratta*. Last autumn when the exhibition was open I had the honour of showing it to prince Michael Paulowitsch Bataroff, our great Mæcenas, you must know, a man who, between ourselves, purchased a miserable Byzantine daub for a Taddeo Gaddi, and who in other ways has paid pretty dear for his rank of connoisseur. However, that does not matter; when he is in the right hands his money does sometimes reach the right man. Well, I may call myself his oracle. Whenever anything is offered to him, especially if it is a modern work by a master as yet unknown to fame, he always wishes to learn from *me* whether the thing really pleases *him*. Of course I am as rude to him as

befits a good diplomatist who would be pardoned for his superior taste. Well, as I told you, we snuffed our way through the exhibition, I acting all the time as his truffle-dog, and one day he was very pathetic. He declaimed in the most wonderful tirades about the moral influence of art, about the priesthood of genius, and about the impossibility that the German race should produce great artists—phrases which always remind me of the celebrated programme symphony, ‘*Sur l’influence du bleu dans les arts*’ out of the ‘*Scènes de la vie de Bohème*.’ Well, on that particular day he rode his hobby-horse, and maintained that in art only the highest have any right to exist. If he were the Caligula of *Æsthetics*, he should wish that all indifferent artists had but one neck, in order that it could be severed at one blow from the body. I, who am about old enough to receive the sweet word pap of an absolute theory on art with a grimace, ventured to remark drily, that I did know of departments in public life where bungling was even more dangerous than in art, and that perhaps an indifferent minister, doctor, or teacher of souls, to say nothing of an ignorant cook, was far more universally mischievous than a poor devil of a painter, who dabbled innocently and happily all over his canvas thinking himself an artist capable of understanding and enjoying life and beauty far better than other mortals. Whom does he harm, if not perhaps himself, when he can sell nothing, and has to starve with his wife and children? And supposing he really does help to spoil the taste of the public, would that be a more reprehensible crime than is committed by a minister who excites nations against one another, or by a cook who gives us food which disagrees with us, not to mention bad doctors who cannot afterwards put us to rights again? No; at no price would I wish to do away with honest mediocrity, so long as they are not inflated fools or rogues who gain commissions by intrigue and swindling. A

hundred thousand bunglers are necessary before one genius can distinguish himself above them all, but whether the eternal stars with all their brilliancy enjoy as much happiness as most of these glow-worms, who live but a day and yet rejoice in their modest spark, is a great question, &c., &c. His Highness condescended to laugh and to call me a paradoxical sophist. 'Look at this picture, my dear baron,' he exclaimed, going up to a genuine Zaunkönig, which cut a very poor figure indeed. 'Will you maintain, in the face of this sufficiently miserable production, that the poor in art have also the kingdom of heaven for their portion, that this honest painter has rejoiced in his work, and that he would not abandon his trade with joy if he had learnt any other? I wager that most of these gentlemen who feign to be filled with the sacred fire of art, though, as old Schadow says, "they have only got into the habit of painting," would not hesitate for a moment to break themselves of this habit if it were made better worth their while to do nothing.' Well, after all, he is not completely wrong. You know very well what a rôle industrialism plays now-a-days in art. But this cold *blasé* tone of superiority irritated me, especially as I have a pretty clear notion of the amount of sacred artistic fire possessed by his Highness. And at that very moment I saw the honest modest face of our Zaunkönig approaching, almost in alarm at seeing any one stand so long before his unpretending little hedge. 'Your Highness may put it to the test,' I said quickly; 'the painter of this picture is quite close to us. My Mantegna against your Luini that this excellent man would sell for no amount of gold the pleasure of producing from time to time a little abomination of this kind. But we must go carefully to work. His pride would be grievously offended by an open offer. Propose to pay him a yearly stipend on condition that he never touches a brush except for

you, and that he must wait till you send him a commission. I will acknowledge your Taddeo Gaddi to be genuine if the little painter can stand a whole year without daubing at some of his little palings and fore-grounds.'

"What do you think of this malicious wager? My dear fellow, I know it was not a proper one. But I had proposed it almost before I knew what I was about; and my Mæcenas was prince and Russian enough to look upon the joke as a very witty one. I felt ashamed of myself when the Zaunkönig was summoned, and was touchingly confused on learning that his 'specialty' had at length met with genuine appreciation. 'How much do you make by your paintings in a good year,' inquired the prince. 'At most three hundred thalers,' was the answer. 'Well, I will give you a thousand, and from this time forth you are my court painter. Your salary shall be paid half-yearly at the embassy if you will promise never to touch a brush except when I give you a commission. Good-morning.' And there stood the good little man as if he had fallen from the clouds, while several of his fellow-artists, filled with jealousy, paid him ironical compliments. But do you know that since then I have not slept so well as usual? For I have undertaken the pleasant task of watching the new court painter to see whether he really does keep literally to his contract. But as I should only increase the evil were I now to confess, and as besides I really do hope to win my bet with triumph, and also to prove the honour of my old friend, I must go on to the end. I was now on my way to him. He once confessed to me that he always felt inspired by spring. The trees themselves are then bare like palings, vegetation is scanty, and the difficulties altogether less. Yesterday the secretary at the embassy gave me a letter, in which our painter inquires of his Highness whether he shall paint a very promising subject for him—the last

snow on a low hedge, above, the deep sky of spring, the early grasses, &c. All the prince's letters, that is to say, those that come from artists, pass through my hands. Well, it seems I shall win my Luini sooner than I thought. But I cannot bear acting the spy. My dear fellow, as you are quite unconcerned in the matter, you might do me the favour, especially as being a psychologist it will be of interest to you—"

"My dear baron," said Edwin, interrupting him, and smiling as he spoke, "I am much obliged for the part you would have me play in this tragi-comedy. But seriously I do not know that I can undertake it; the visit that I am about to make may be my last for a long time, if not for ever. I yesterday offered myself as professor of mathematics at L——. If I am appointed I am resolved to exchange the air of Berlin, which I do not find favourable to the constitution of a *privat docent*, for a different one. Besides, do not take your wager too much to heart. Not only is psychology beholden to you, but I see no danger for our excellent friend. The saying, 'Here the inadequate to fulness groweth,' suits him exactly. I am as convinced as yourself that you will win, and then it will be very easy to find a pretext (Russian princes have their caprices) for putting an end to the whole business. Your prince, Michael Paulowitsch, will have learnt a good lesson, and our Zaunkönig will in spite of everything have honestly earned his thousand thalers. But here we are at his nest. Will you not come in with me? Though for this once I can put my talents as detective at your disposal."

"*Mille grazie*," replied the other, "I take you at your word. Write me a line this afternoon, merely yes or no, whether the old sinner is not secretly wasting his colours and washing his brushes, or whether he is conscientiously abiding by his contract. I will then add a postscript to his letter to the prince. Good-bye; I wish you success!"

“Edwin entered the little house with a beating heart. The door happened to be open, and he met nobody in the hall. His heart told him that he should find Lea in the sitting-room to the right. Yet he knocked at the door of the studio, and, without waiting for permission, stepped hastily across the threshold which he had avoided for so long a time.

CHAPTER IX.

ON his entrance the little painter sprang from his seat at the window, where, lost in thought, he seemed to have been sitting for some time.

"God be praised!" he cried, and his honest woe-begone face cleared, while he stretched out both his hands towards Edwin—"you again walk among the living! It is very good of you to think of your old friends at once, though this is not the air for a convalescent. You have come to see people who, on this beautiful spring day, are sitting in sorrow and in the shadow of death. Well, as God wills."

He now told Edwin, while the tears ran down his cheeks, that Lea was now so bad that she could scarcely get an hour's sleep, and that the nourishment she took would barely suffice for a new-born babe, that she bore her fate with such heavenly patience, that he often wondered where she got her strength from, as she never prayed, nor did she accept everything as the will of an all-merciful Father, who would make even what was most incomprehensible and the hardest to bear, turn out for our good. In that she is like her mother; her single defence and weapon against suffering was silence and meditation. Go to her, my dear doctor; I know she will be glad to see you. She has always thought so much of you,

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and God knows I have often reproached myself for having given in to the good professorin, about your lessons. Dr. Marquard says it is caused by the mind—that she needs diversion, she is always brooding over her own thoughts—good God, if philosophy could only restore her sleep and appetite—could save my child—” His voice failed him; he pressed his handkerchief to his eyes.

“If you will give me permission I will try what I can do. Philosophy has cast out many evil spirits, and has renewed the blood of whole generations. I will talk to your daughter, and I hope it is not too late.”

He turned away to hide his emotion, and left the studio quickly. When he entered Lea's room he found her lying on the sofa, with a book before her; the beautiful dark eyes turned towards him like two great flames, the glow of which was seemingly wasting away the waxen image. Otherwise she was not changed; her skin was more transparent, and a smile of suffering was frozen on her lips. But now on his going up to her and taking her hand with a few words of friendly sympathy, a dark red overspread the delicate face, and suddenly gave it the appearance of blooming health.

“How anxious you are making us!” he said, pulling a chair up to her sofa. “No, if you do not wish to drive me away you must remain as you are. I have been so glad to think of seeing you again! Since that dreadful day I have only heard of you through others—only think, I never read your diary till yesterday.”

She made a movement as if to implore him not to speak of it, and said, “You have so much that is more important to do; if it had not been my father's wish—”

“No, dear Fraulein,” he said, “I only wish that I had not wasted my time in so much that was useless

before I took up this manuscript; and yet who knows whether formerly I should have been capable of thoroughly appreciating the worth of the treasure you confided to me."

She turned pale suddenly. "No," she said gently, "do not treat me like a child, to whom you must say pretty things because you think it necessary to spare me, or to flatter me because you see my weakness. It pains me; I have not been accustomed to it from you."

"I know you to be suffering and in need of consideration," he replied, with a voice that trembled slightly. "And yet, Lea, I have come to say something to you which will excite you, whatever you may think of it, and however you may be able to answer it. Since I have read your manuscript, it has grown clear to me that I have been groping like one in a dream, without discovering the true, the one only real happiness,—the happiness of having found a being such as these pages disclose, and of never losing her again!

"They have tried to separate us, dear Lea," he continued in increasing excitement, while she lay there with closed eyes, her hands clasped on her breast, and without a sign of life. "But it has only made us the more to one another. We have both found out how necessary we are to each other, and that apart we are ill-prepared to meet life. You will perhaps doubt whether I ever really missed you; indeed I was myself unconscious of doing so. I was completely mastered by a passion which alienated me from myself as if I had been possessed by a demon. I hardly know how much you know or suspect of all this. For the first time in my life I have felt the elemental power of a woman, and it has indeed caused me enough suffering. But that is all past, Lea, there is not a trace of it left. She is about to become the wife of another, and the news did not cause my heart

to beat in the least. Oh, Lea, it was a terrible time! When I now think that it might have been otherwise, and that it might have been my fate to submit my whole soul to this force—a force which used one's pride, one's freedom, and everything indeed by which one should set a store, as if they had all been so many playthings, and which even when Balder was at his worst made me almost callous—I shudder at myself and at the danger which I ran. But you must know it; you must learn what a weak man this is, who now comes to you and says: Will you, can you, nevertheless, join your life to mine? Can you give your heart, Lea, to one who has already once lost himself, and who will perhaps never entirely lose the traces of his servitude? If you do say no, Lea, I shall understand it, and must bear it. I know that I was something to you. You would rather have burnt that manuscript than have confided it to me, if you had not felt drawn to me. And yet, Lea, I should not think less well of you if, after the confession I have just made, you were to take back your heart, if your pride were to forbid your being satisfied with what I can now offer you in all sincerity. You have the right to expect and require, that the man to whom you may give yourself should repay you with passionate love and devotion, and that there never could have been the slightest thought of danger to him from the influence of another; while I, dearest Lea, am as you see me here, a fugitive who has fled from a severe combat, and is as yet scarcely healed. I come to you because I know that I can be hidden as securely nowhere else; that I can nowhere find so safe a refuge as with you. What I feel for you—we did not get so far as Spinoza," he said, interrupting himself with a smile, "so that you are not conversant with the expression of the school. The feeling of men towards that which this great philosopher called God, the absolute substance, which comprehends in itself everything else, the enhancing

of our feelings which is the result of absorbing meditation on the nature of this universal power he calls intellectual love. It is neither a jest nor blasphemy, but the simple expression of the truth, if I say to you, 'I love you, dear Lea, with a love like this.' That blind wild passion usually called love, has been washed from my blood—I hope for ever; I am now full of the blessed conviction that you are the best, the deepest, the noblest woman who has ever appeared upon earth, that I have no world apart from you, and that the man to whom you will give yourself would be the happiest of human beings!"

While he stammered the last words he had stooped over her hands, and now he sank down on the carpet beside her sofa, holding her hands firmly clasped in his own, with his eyes fixed on her cool slender fingers, incapable of raising them to her face; and so some time passed in a kind of blissful unconsciousness. He felt so happy at having poured out his feelings to her, that he scarcely thought of her answer, though he was very far from counting upon a favourable one. But she still remained silent. At last he looked at her in sudden anxiety; what he saw frightened him, and he sprang up hastily, for he could not doubt that she had fainted. He quickly seized a little bottle containing some strong essence which he saw lying on her table, and pouring some on his handkerchief, proceeded to rub her temples, to restore life to her pale lips.

"Lea!" he cried, "come to yourself! Hear me! Oh do not punish me for my thoughtlessness in coming to you now when you are so suffering—"

She slightly moved her lips—she again slowly opened her eyes.

"Forgive me for having frightened you, my darling!" she whispered. "The happiness was too great—too sudden. But now I am all right again. I live—I *shall* live for you, I know it now, *through* you and *for* you. Edwin, is it really possible?"

She had raised her arm as if seeking for something, and then she shyly put it round his neck. He bent down to her face which was now all in a glow. "My wife," he whispered, "you are mine! mine! mine! and as truly as I hope to be blessed in you—"

Her mouth which sought his own stopped this vow of eternal love and faith, and set a seal to it.

CHAPTER X.

THE same day towards dark the little painter might have been seen hurrying down the street where the professorin lived. He scarcely looked like the same man we saw in the morning sitting in his studio. Although old gentlemen do not usually find March winds as congenial to them as spring breezes, he had crept unseen out of his house, and with the happy thoughtlessness of a young man, who, being in love, has need of nothing to keep himself warm, had omitted to put on his great-coat, and even when outside did not seem to miss it. He had exchanged a bright five-groschen bit for a little bunch of violets which a poor girl offered him; he had stuck it in his button-hole, and his white hat was placed jauntily over his left ear, as it always was in his moments of enthusiasm, and the people who saw him striding by and looking all about with a look of sly joy, now and then nodding to a pretty child, now and then switching the air with his little cane, might well believe that wine had been playing its accustomed tricks on the little man, and had persuaded him that he was again twenty, and that he might conduct himself improperly and freely as if he were the most promising young student.

But no sooner did he catch sight in the distance of the professorin's house, than his defiantly happy mien

changed all of a sudden, his pace grew more moderate, and a thoughtful shadow darkened his face. Indeed for a moment he stood still, as if considering whether it would not be better to turn back. Then, however, he seemed to recall his manhood, though with a sigh; he energetically buttoned the top button of his little over-coat, pushed his hat straight, and advanced with resolute steps to the house of his spiritual adviser.

He found her up-stairs in the large room surrounded by a swarm of little girls, who came twice in the week to her in order to learn to work, and whom, before dismissing, she strengthened with precepts of wisdom and virtue, together with a cup of coffee and a large roll. The lesson hour was just over, and the little people were crowding tumultuously round their benefactress, who for the most part avoided numerous kisses on her hand, by stroking the round cheeks or tapping in a kindly manner the little shoulders. In spite of the darkness of twilight, the manner and voice of her old friend told her at once that something most unusual had brought him to her, and she quickly preceded him into the neighbouring room, where before the portrait of the late professor her little lamp was already lighted. Her first inquiry was for Lea. "She is well," answered the painter, at the same time drawing the bunch of violets from his button and gallantly presenting it to his old flame. "My dear friend, what has happened to you?" she asked with anxiety. She usually said "ihr" to him when they were alone, as they were rather too intimate for "Sie," and yet they had never ventured upon "du."

"With me?" he replied audaciously, as if he really imagined himself capable of having a secret from this woman. "I don't know what you mean, best of friends; I am not different from usual. But it is stiflingly hot here. Will you allow me just to open that window?"

"Dear König," she answered very quietly, "do not be foolish. I can read your good old heart as clearly

as my hymn-book with the large print. You have come to bring me some news, at which you rejoice, and yet you have not the courage to bring it out. Come, tell me what it is; in half an hour I must be with the committee of the society in aid of lying-in women. You say Lea is well? Is it possible that some charlatan of a doctor has so inspired you with new hope?"

"You are wisdom personified," said the painter with a smile, as he took her place at the work-table and began thoughtfully to rummage in her basket. "It certainly is a doctor who has inspired me with new hope, but no charlatan, and besides—" He again came to a stand-still, and stooped down to pick up a thimble which he had fortunately dropped upon the floor.

"For heaven's sake keep your hands off my things," exclaimed Fran Valentin. "You make me quite nervous; how would you like me to fidget with your paint-brushes? And now to make a long story short—for I hate all riddles and mysteries—who is this doctor, and what has he done to make you hope?"

"You shall hear everything, my dear friend, but I know you will not quite approve of the medicine, and therefore I should like to prepare you a little. For sometimes there is a look in your eyes which frightens even an old friend like myself. But if you will have it, our Lea is engaged!"

"Engaged! that is indeed news, for which one could not have been prepared. My dear old friend, I hope you are not jesting. You really look almost as if you were somewhat excited by wine, and as if your head were full of all sorts of wild nonsense."

"This is only another proof of your clear-sighted wisdom!" laughed Herr König, rubbing his hands with great satisfaction, feeling that he had got over the most difficult part of the business. "I have actually emptied half a bottle or perhaps even two-

thirds, for my future son-in-law, like most people who are in love, is incapable of appreciating a drop of good wine."

"Come, that is better still. So things have got as far as that, have they? A regular betrothal dinner, and Lea's second mother would have heard nothing of the whole affair if the wine had not rendered you garrulous. Well, Herr König, during our long acquaintance I have had to overlook many things—but *this*—" He sprang lightly from his chair and approached his offended friend, who had seated herself on the sofa and turned her eyes resolutely from him.

"My dearest friend!" he said, "please hear how everything came about. The very respect we all feel for you caused us to hesitate a little, to take time in order that we might hear all that there was to say on each side before asking for your approval. Good gracious, as far as I am concerned, I was as astonished as if he had fallen from the skies. And though I was very, very happy—believe me I was always haunted by the thought of what you would think of it? You know well enough, that as regards yourself I am under petticoat government, and how gladly I submit to it, though you sometimes do treat me worse than my love and faith in you deserve. But this time—no! I *could* not ask your advice. Tell me yourself; if your child had fallen into a river, and there was a man ready to pull her out again, would you first ask what his views were? Now you see, though I know that the Herr doctor—"

"Doctor Marquard? This Don Juan, this enemy of marriage? This child of the world in the worst acceptance—and our Lea?"

"God forbid, my dear friend; this time your prophetic soul has left you in the lurch, and yet I scarcely know whether you will not be even more horrified at the real truth. Listen; perhaps I am not as good a Christian as I ought to be; anyhow you are a better

one, and as regards theology you know more with your little finger than I do with the whole of my brains. And yet—I was startled when the young people came and confessed to me what had never occurred to me even in a dream: this good man, this godless philosopher—”

“Edwin? Dr. Edwin? Oh, I thought as much!”

“Yes indeed,” replied the little painter with a nod; “no other than the teacher whom we dismissed, and who will now have a lifetime in which to carry on the interrupted lessons. Do you really think that the rosy cheeks and happy beaming eyes of my poor girl could console me at once for the thought that there is now no hope of her becoming a child of God?—and yet only a very barbarous father would have had the heart to say ‘no’ when it was a question of the life or death of his only child; or if that is too strongly put, it would have needed an old martyr of the dark middle ages to have preferred death for his child to her happy life with an unbeliever. And that her illness has all been the result of hidden love, and that without *him* she would just have faded away, I saw clearly enough at dinner, when, simply because he was sitting by her, and looking at her tenderly, she had, in spite of all her happiness, a better appetite than she has had for months; and when at last he had taken his departure, she fell fast asleep on the sofa more soundly than if she had taken all the opiates in the world. Then I crept away in order to break it to you, my dearest friend. Please say something kind to me; and if that is not possible, I would rather hear something unkind than see you sit there so still and silent on the sofa, pressing your handkerchief to your face in order that I should not see what my best friend thinks of the happiness of my poor child.”

At that she took away her handkerchief and showed him two eyes streaming with tears, which looked at

him with a strange mingled expression of resentment and friendliness.

"You are an old hypocrite," she said drying her eyes. "I certainly am not as you say your best friend, otherwise you would not have misunderstood and maligned me so sadly to yourself and doubtless to the young people, as if I were sitting here with the severe face of a judge; and as if it were really a service of danger to come to the house with the announcement of the engagement. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, you unbeliever. You certainly are not a perfect Christian if you give your neighbour credit for having a heart full of jealousy and intolerance, instead of one ready to submit to the decrees of God, and to accept with thankful hope whatever He may send. If I have now been surprised into weeping, not merely for joy and thankfulness that our Lea should be saved, but also for annoyance at you, bad man, make up for your sins and carry my congratulations this very day to the godless doctor, together with an invitation to a dinner of four people here to-morrow; do you understand? And now tell me on your honour if I am not better than I am said to be, and by no means the hardened theologian you took me for? My dear child, my Lea!—yes indeed, to have agreed to her learning sheer infidelity! I could not have consented to it, and yet, do you not know, my dear friend, that God's ways are wonderful? Perhaps He will draw these two hearts, who know nothing, and wish to know nothing, of Him, by this round-about way to Himself; He perhaps leads them to one another, and through all the joy and all the sorrow of the marriage state in order that they may return to their heavenly Father hand in hand. There is no more powerful inward influence than matrimony, of course for two honest hearts; and that the doctor, in spite of his blindness, is thoroughly honest we have never doubted. So I say 'yes' and 'amen,' my dear friend, and as

it is a day of joy, all sinners shall be forgiven. As a sign that I bear no grudge, I, the mother of the bride, will embrace her father!"

"You are an angel, a blessed angel," cried the painter; and he availed himself so vehemently of the permission, that the blushing lady was at last forced to defend herself. "Yes indeed," he continued, when he had at length recovered his breath, "this marriage has certainly been made in heaven; there is every sign of its being so. Only think how wonderful it all is! It was only this morning that I was sitting quite out of sorts, and pondering whether it would not be better to throw up my appointment to his Russian Highness, together with my salary, rather than to continue thus to spend the money in sinful miserable idleness. Who knows but that the prince may have already forgotten my existence, and I may go on sitting still year after year, and waiting for commissions which never come? But now it is clear that God has provided me with the means of settling my Lea fairly comfortably. My dearest friend, I know you have always said that that should be your affair; but after all a father likes—"

He was just beginning with these words to pour out all his plans for the immediate future, when the professorin's maid entered and announced a visitor, a gentleman who only wanted to ask one question, and who would not give his name.

Before her mistress had time to answer, a quick step was heard in the ante-room, and to the Zaunkönig's no small astonishment the gigantic form of Heinrich Mohr appeared on the threshold.

"I beg a thousand pardons," he exclaimed in his rough voice. "Though I have a name for uncere-
moniousness I am not usually so rude as to break in on a lady in this manner. But circumstances which time will explain—the conviction that there is danger in delay—perhaps indeed the life of more than one

human being may depend on whether you will be kind enough to grant me a hearing for five minutes."

He had uttered all this with such strange excitement, his whole appearance was so disturbed, that the professorin really hardly knew whether to accede to his request or not. But the little painter put an end at once to her hesitation.

"My dear fellow!" he exclaimed, "you are not disturbing us in the least; my mission here is fulfilled; I must hasten home to illuminate the Venetian palace; our lagoon shall shine and sparkle as finely as ever did the grand canal at the marriage of the Doge, and you must be among the guests, Herr Mohr. No excuses. You owe it to your particular friend."

"What friend?"

"Why our doctor, your friend Edwin, who is engaged to my little Lea. Have you not heard it yet?"

"Not a syllable of it. Engaged! I congratulate you. But don't reckon on me for this evening."

The painter looked at him with dismay. He was surprised and offended at this cold-blooded way of receiving such great news. But his cheerfulness was too beaming to be long overcast. "As you will," he said; "I will bear no grudge. The young couple anyhow will not miss you, and to sit apart with an old fellow like me—you are right, it would be but poor fun. Well it must be for another time; good-bye!"

He seized his hat, and in overpowering spirits he swung it as a way of bidding farewell to the professorin; as he did this the pins which had held together the somewhat dilapidated crape fell out, and the sign of his seven years' mourning fell to the ground. He was on the point of bending down to pick it up, but changed his mind. "No," said he, "let it be. If Lea's mother is looking down at her child she will think it quite natural that I should wear no crape after to-day. *Au revoir*, my friend; you are really an angel!"

CHAPTER XI.

As soon as the painter had left the room Mohr, who had remained standing gloomily and indifferently by the door, approached the professorin, and in the tone of a highwayman demanding her purse, said :

"You know a certain Lorinser. As I have reasons for considering him a rogue, who is cunningly and persistently hiding from deserved chastisement, I venture to ask you whether you have heard anything of him since he left Berlin ?"

"Lorinser !" cried the lady. "Oh, Herr Mohr, do not speak of this terrible man who has already caused me trouble enough. No, I do not know at all where he is staying ; I don't want to know it ; I will never see him again ; and I am sure enough that he has as much reason for avoiding my house as for keeping away from Berlin."

"As regards that," returned Mohr with a grim smile, "you do not yet quite understand this protestant jesuit. I certainly was told that he had gone away, both when I made inquiries months ago, and more lately, when I went to his former lodging and to the police. But people like him, who live on such intimate terms with angels and archangels, have perhaps means of ascertaining before their death what they must do in order to walk about with a transfigured body. One need pay no rent, and can creep through key-holes.

From the beginning it has appeared to me highly improbable that this man of honour should have left this great city for good, in the troubled waters of which he can fish so comfortably and profitably. And this very afternoon, as I happened to be honouring him with my thoughts, he drove by in a droschke. I only saw him through the window, and he has let his beard grow; but if I am mistaken, may I be condemned to go to the same heaven into which this rascal hopes to swindle his way. Forgive the strong way I have of expressing myself. Since rogues such as this our beloved in the Lord have taken to the honey sweet pastoral style, an honest fellow can only hide himself in his natural coarseness."

"You have seen him? Lorinser? oh no!"

"I am convinced that there are not two men with these deep-set Lucifer eyes, which shine like mother of pearl. Besides, he seemed to recognize me; he shrank back into the corner, but it was too late. Unfortunately, though, I lost sight of him; perhaps, thought I, he is again in favour with his old acquaintances; forgiveness up to seventy times seven is one's duty as a Christian, even of such a devil as this. He will, it seemed to me, at all events, have continued to behave properly at the frau professorin's; he is not likely to have unmasked himself before her. I confess I half-expected to find him here when the girl said you were engaged, and that is why I rushed in so unceremoniously."

The professorin had sunk back on to the sofa, gazing before her in unconcealed terror.

"No," she said; "we two have done with one another. Even if he should have the audacity to knock at my door I shall take good care that it is never opened to him. The holiest sayings have never been used for wicked ends than by him, or the purest confidence been more trampled on. I will not speak of the sums of money, though they amounted to

hundreds, which he talked me out of for philanthropic and religious objects, in order, as I afterwards learnt, to spend them on his dissolute life. But that he could ruin a good young girl whom I employed in my house—I would rather not speak of it. Whenever I think of it, it makes me so angry that I forget that one is commanded to forgive, and feel ready to curse this devil.”

“Hum!” muttered Mohr between his teeth. “Embezzlement of money—good young girl—excellent materials. Pardon me if I do not feel inclined to break off this interesting conversation. Perhaps you would be kind enough to tell me the name of this unhappy girl, and where she lives.”

“What interest can it have for you?”

“A very Christian one, or at all events a thoroughly honest one. For when the archangel Gabriel—or was it Michael?—thrust down the wicked archfiend to his own place, the doctrine of forgiving to seventy times seven had not been discovered. Supposing that I should be now panting to act the archangel. Do not hesitate to confide in me. I wager that your poor *protégée* knows where this wolf in sheep’s clothing has hidden, and as I have more than one account to settle with him—”

“Do what you think your duty, I will not hinder you. That would be taking the matter out of God’s hands, who has perhaps chosen you as the instrument of His will. Here”—she took a paper out of her pocket-book—“is the list of my workwomen. The name which I have struck out is that of the unhappy girl.”

“Like the black board in the doges’ palace: ‘Marino Falieri decapitatus pro crimine.’ Allow me to make a note of her address. There, pray forgive this unwelcome visit. The messengers of the council of ten in Venice were equally execrated because of the importunity which their office necessitated.”

She dismissed him with a silent movement of the

head. Only when he had got as far as the ante-chamber she called after him, and begged him in God's name to treat the poor girl considerately, who had certainly deserved a better fate.

"Be quite easy," was his answer. "We children of the world are all sinners, and know perfectly well what poor sinners feel——"

Half an hour later he was knocking at the door of a garret in one of the most out-of-the-way streets of the Friedrichstadt.

The thin voice of a man cried "Come in!" In the deep recess of the window sat a funny little cross-legged figure on a table, profiting by the last rays of light to work at a woman's gown. When his visitor asked for "Fräulein Johanna," the busy little man dropped his work, and shaking his head angrily, cried in a hoarse falsetto voice:

"Can you not read, sir? Pray look at the door-plate, surely the letters are large enough and clear enough—'Wachtel, ladies' tailor.' The young lady whom you seek used to live here, but she is now far too grand to live up four stories. Of course those who fall, fall down-stairs, out of the attics into the first floor, till they sink much lower still, first into the cellar and then five feet underground. However, it is not *my* affair, even for the fall of our first parents ladies' tailors were not responsible. Why? you know better than me. Ha! ha!"

He laughed and took up his needle again.

"The young lady lives *alone*?"

"Alone or not just as you like. 'I am solitary but not alone,' as Schiller says. But go and find out for yourself, sir; I don't think she is so afraid of evening visitors as she used to be when she worked for me. Now I work for *her*, and at all events it pays better. For this sort, you must know——"

"Does a certain Herr Lorinser live with her—a sort of pale preaching fellow with a black beard?"

"Don't know, sir. It's not my affair to keep a registry. Mamsell Johanne will be quite pleased to tell you all she knows. Her present one is clerk to a banker, and during office hours he is safe to be away. So if you wish to have a private conversation with her—ha! ha!"

Mohr nodded silently and left the grinning little man. A feeling of disgust overcame him, and it only increased when, on reaching the landing on the first floor, he heard a girl's voice singing a song of Offenbach's which at that time was a great favourite.

His ring interrupted the song; the door was at once opened by a slight young girl with large eyes of unusual brilliancy in the midst of a pale little face.

"Is that you, Edward?" she exclaimed. Then discovering her mistake, but without special sign of embarrassment, she said, "What do you want, sir?"

Mohr looked at her for a moment with the most heartfelt compassion, which, however, gave to his wonderfully massive face such an expression of grimness that the pretty girl began to feel uncomfortable, and to wonder how she should get rid of the strange-looking man.

"Don't be alarmed, Fräulein," said he, guessing her feelings. "I am certainly not 'Edward,' but I have come with the best of intentions; if only you can give me two minutes—"

"Certainly, sir, if you can do your business outside."

"As you wish. Be so kind as to answer one question—do you know the present abode of a certain Herr Lorinser?"

A deep red suddenly overspread her face. Her eyes, which had shone with a curiously unsteady light, were now lit up with a gloomy, malignant fire.

The hand which held the door trembled slightly; she had to consider what her answer should be.

"Why do you ask this question?" she said hastily and softly. "But come in. Here on the landing it—"

He followed her into the entrance of the room ; she closed the door after them, but remained standing on the threshold, and did not invite him to sit down.

"Fräulein," he began again, "I have personal business to settle with this Herr Candidat. A few months ago he disappeared, now he has turned up again, and as you are the only person who can help me to find him—for I imagine that he will hardly have returned to town with his own name—"

"But what brings you to *me*? Who has told you?"

"Some one who is very friendly to you, and who regrets very much all that has happened."

"I know whom you mean—Professorin Valentin. Ha, ha!" she laughed, and her whole tone changed. "So it is she, and she is friendly to me? Perhaps she has her own ideas of friendliness. When I went back to her and wanted work I thought that she at least would receive me again, although all my other old acquaintances would have nothing to say to me—I met with nothing but shrugs of the shoulder and stern faces, and she was extremely sorry, but she could not let her other workwomen suffer from such an example; then a couple of thalers thrust into my hand, and a recommendation to some reformatory or other. First I cried, then I laughed, and now I always laugh when I hear that these pious people mean kindly towards me. Go back again and tell her—"

"Please, Fräulein," said he, interrupting her, "do not let us wander from the subject in hand. That wolf in the sheep's clothing of humility, that seller of souls who behaved so shamefully to you—"

"I will hear nothing of him!" she cried violently. "I would rather die than be obliged to see this man, without whom I— Come, it is not worth while to excite oneself about it. I was a silly, childish creature, I believed everything that was said to me; now I believe in nothing any more, neither in heaven nor in hell, but I will not have my little share of fun spoilt in the

world. Excuse my receiving you so uncivilly, sir, but I have still to dress myself; to-day I am going to elysium—concert and ball—one is only young once. If you really wish to know where the Herr Candidat lives—well, he has changed his name to Moser—there is his card with his direction written on it. He told me that he had come to me before going anywhere else, that he still loved me, that he would prove it by providing for me. But, as I said, I would rather throw myself out of the window than ever have anything more to do with that wicked man. Perhaps—” and she lowered her voice a little, “perhaps, after all, there is an hereafter and a last judgment. But if when that time comes I am lost, why I will open my mouth and speak—I will tell all that I have suffered, what I *was* and what I have *become*, and through *whom*. Here is the card, and now—” she opened the door, and bowing without embarrassment, but prettily and with graceful propriety, showed Mohr out, who in spite of his usually ready tongue felt struck with dumbness and deep compassion before this poor lost young thing.

CHAPTER XII.

It was striking seven o'clock as he left the house, and was quite dark. The address on the card was of a house quite at the other end of the town; and with all the excitement he had gone through on that day, he felt considerably exhausted. But he could not make up his mind to postpone this visit to the next morning. He threw himself into a droschke and drove through the dark streets lost in the deepest thought.

At last he stood still before a clean two-storied house. By the light of a lamp he read the name of the master of the house, by the side of the night-bell, and under the name stood the word "*rentier*." In answer to his ring a maid-servant appeared who absolutely refused to admit him. Her master and mistress were holding a prayer-meeting with the strange gentleman who had just hired the room up-stairs, and she must not announce any one.

"Neither need you announce me, my dear," replied Mohr composedly, pressing a thaler into her hand. "I want to surprise them; I am a very intimate friend of the Herr Candidat's, and he will be quite absurdly delighted to see me enter so unexpectedly. Besides, as soon as I have myself put him through his catechism I will let him pray on in peace."

The girl did not observe the strange tone of wild

irony with which these words were spoken, but accepted it all as literally as she did the thaler she held in her hand. She lighted the generous visitor up to the second story, and pointed with a cunning smile of comprehension to a door through which sounded a strange hollow murmur.

He distinctly recognized the voice of the man for whom he had been seeking for months past with untiring hatred. All his blood rushed to his head, and it was some minutes before he could recover even a semblance of indifference.

"You may go, my good girl," he said; "I need no light to find my way."

After she had gone down he listened a few moments more. Lorinser seemed to be reading aloud out of some religious book; in between could be heard long-drawn regular sounds as of some one snoring. Mohr laid his hand softly on the door latch, and lifted it so noiselessly that he had already stood for some time in the room before its occupants were aware of his presence.

The candidate was sitting on a broad sofa; the lower half of his face was hidden with a thick black beard, which made it very difficult to recognize him; his closely-cropped head was covered with a three-cornered cap of black velvet, which was pushed far back, leaving exposed the smooth high forehead. By his side, in most unequivocally close proximity to him, sat a pretty woman, who appeared to be reading with him in the same book, and eagerly following the words, while she held his hand firmly clasped in both her own. An elderly man, with common-place, foolish features, lay back in a large arm-chair, and accompanied the reading with his peaceful snores.

It only needed one glance to prove to Mohr the state of things.

"Do not let me disturb you, ladies and gentlemen," he said suddenly, with the greatest politeness. "I

only want to say a few words in private to the Herr Candidat Moser!"

Lorinser sprang up, the lady uttered a scream and let go his hand, the sleeper started and rubbed his eyes in astonishment. For a moment it was as if all three were turned to stone by the sudden sight of the strange face. Mohr gave himself time to enjoy this spectacle and advanced a step nearer, bowing as he did so to the lady of the house.

"Whom do you want here, sir?" now inquired the Candidate, who had quickly recovered himself. "I have not the honour of knowing you."

"So said Peter," answered Mohr drily. "But I hope that you will recognize me before the cock crows. Allow me to take a seat. Will you have the kindness to present me to this lady and gentleman, or shall I present myself?"

"This is really too much insolence," muttered Lorinser, who had turned deadly pale. "You dare, sir, to force your way into a strange house, and without the slightest apology to interrupt our evening devotions?"

"I do dare to do so. The night will be quite long enough for you to continue that which I regret to have interrupted. I only ask a quarter of an hour of your precious time—and then I will no longer be in your way."

The lady had turned away to conceal her embarrassment, and now she crept out of the room; her husband also seemed on the point of going.

"Pray remain," cried Lorinser, still preserving the mask of superior indignation; "you shall be my witness, my worthy friend—"

"As you will," said Mohr with freezing quietness. "As far as I am concerned the gentleman may draw up a record of our negotiations. To begin with then, I come direct from Fräulein Johanne—" He kept his eye fixed on the Candidate and the effect produced by

the mention of this name answered his expectations. A short pause ensued. Then Lorinser whispered something into the ear of his host, and the latter, nodding submissively, left the room.

Hardly were they alone than Mohr drew out of his pocket the box containing his Latakia and began to roll a cigarette.

"You will excuse my smoking," he said politely to his silent companion. "Your air here is confoundedly bad—an odious mixture of exhalations from heaven and hell; I am afraid of infection, and should like to disinfect myself."

Lorinser had cast down his eyes. Not a feature of his rigid face betrayed his feelings at this visit; only when Mohr lighted his cigarette he said with a slight cough:

"I must beg you to lose no time—I do not like this smell."

"Not more than I can help," returned Mohr phlegmatically. "You will do me the credit of believing that only very serious business would have brought me to you; I should hardly have taken this trouble merely in order to continue an acquaintance which would naturally be most uninteresting to me. The class of men to which you belong is, heaven be praised, not very numerous; but it is so well known that to study it further would be waste of time. Goethe has described them capitally in 'Faust'; I dare say you will recall the place where he speaks of a certain form of human caricature. The species which you represent is not new. Zacharias Werner and others are your predecessors, so that you have not even the merit of originality, but are simply a pious, plagiarizing rascal."

"I will only say," began Lorinser, without losing his composure, "that you might as well let us imagine all your invectives to be already poured forth in the same style, while you go at once to the point. I am in the habit of despising abuse, and of consoling

myself with the thought that holier men than myself, even our Redeemer—”

“Good!” broke in Mohr. “One favour is worth another. I will avoid all incivility, however much our business may call for it, if you will promise me never again to dishonour in my presence a name so worthy of honour as that of the founder of the Christian religion by mentioning it with *your* lips. I will confess my weakness to you; it is physical pain to me to hear—how shall I express it?—a poor sinner—that is not abuse—acting a blasphemous farce in the name of this noblest of martyred champions of humanity. Is it agreed? Very well; without further circumlocution, do you know that?”

He thrust his hand into his waistcoat-pocket. Lorinser started involuntarily.

“Don’t be afraid!” laughed Mohr sarcastically. “I have no pistols in my pocket, with which to force you to a general confession. I despise such melodramatic means, which indeed would fail against such a holy man as yourself, who looks upon the crown of martyrdom as your highest reward. I have only here a little book, a neat little copy of Thomas à Kempis. Your name is written at the beginning, I mean your *real* name before you made up your mind to be baptized anew, and to exchange the somewhat sullied old Adam of your Lorinser for the pure name of Moser. You doubtless recognize the little book?”

He held it out; and Lorinser, after glancing hastily at it, nodded affirmatively, whereupon Mohr laid it on the table.

“Thank you,” he continued; “you will render the business easier for both of us if you will avoid unnecessary lies. I found this little book in a room in the Dorotheen strasse from which a lady, in whom I am interested, disappeared the day after your nocturnal visit. I was fortunate enough to discover her two nights later, in wet clothes and in the most silent of

humours; of this you may perhaps not be aware. For five hours we tried in vain to persuade her to speak the slightest word, and when she did make up her mind to reopen her lips and eyes, you were not mentioned. But the little Thomas à Kempis, probably in order to revenge himself for being taken by you into places where there was no question of imitating Christ, has betrayed your secret; the maid who opened the door of the room to you in the evening saw you sneaking out again much later; you probably thought that you were only seen by God, and that He is in the habit of shutting one eye. On my questioning this respectable person she affirmed it all, but engaged never to open her mouth again on the subject. There are therefore only four persons acquainted with the doings of that night, and three of them have good reasons for holding their tongues. But it would not be unlike the fourth if in some devilish freak or other he were to let out the story in order to fulfil it may be a 'benevolent' purpose. Therefore, to be prepared for such a case, you had better tell the fourth person that I am determined to shut his mouth for ever. I will shoot him down like a mad dog, or find some other means of reducing him to silence. Have you understood me? Only a syllable, a wink, a shrug of the shoulders for the purpose of throwing suspicion on the honour of that lady, and you receive from me a passport into the better world."

He stopped as if in expectation of a positive answer. Lorinser had laid back his head and was staring up at the ceiling. He coughed once or twice, and passed his long supple fingers through his beard.

"And this is all that you have come for?" he inquired after a time. "I hope you admire the patience with which I have listened to all your nonsense. But I must beg you not to abuse this patience."

Mohr looked at him with icy scorn.

"You are a precious rascal," he said. "Under

other circumstances I should admire the iron mask which mother nature has devised for you to wear where other men wear their faces. But, as I said before, the air here is so infected that I will confine myself to what is absolutely necessary. Are you acquainted with the present abode of the lady in question?"

"No."

"Is it your intention ever to seek her out?"

"Why should I do so now that my connection with the lady is at an end?"

"Your connection? you express yourself well! But are you further inclined to promise that should you ever meet her anywhere *by chance* you will at once leave the place, and avoid it altogether for the future?"

"A strange promise to require of me. You expect me to put myself to great inconvenience."

"To even more than I have said; you must also once and for ever deny yourself the pleasure of seeing *me*—and this you must solemnly swear, though the value which such an engagement would generally have between men of honour is considerably weakened in your case by the singular relationship in which you stand to your God. I am, however, in possession of means to oblige you to keep your promise."

"I am curious to know what these may be."

"I will tell you with pleasure. I am unfortunately not in a position to chastise you without further ceremony according to your deserts, as one would crush a noxious reptile with one's foot. It might have unpleasant consequences for me, and, as I have still some duties to perform towards my fellow-men, I must avoid as long as possible this last step, which would bring me into difficulties with justice. But though I know that vengeance is the Lord's, yet it is more than I can bear to see a fellow like you going about at liberty. As therefore the arm of justice is too short or too awkward to take hold of slippery miscreants

like you, I have resolved to circumvent you by the noiseless machinery of a secret tribunal. For the future whenever I may meet you I will brand you without mercy, in what manner I leave to the inspiration of the moment. But you shall not remain in the world in which I live!" he suddenly exclaimed aloud as he rose and threw away his cigarette. "Do you quite understand me? I will not *suffer* you; I will persecute you, till for good and all you cease poisoning by your breath the air which I breathe; and it would therefore be perhaps the simplest way of avoiding me if you were to make up your mind without loss of time to emigrate to America, perhaps to the Mormons, to whom you would bring a variety of valuable qualities, unless you should happen to prefer to go straight to Cayenne, a country where there is a fine opening for a spiritual vocation."

A pause ensued. The two deadly enemies stared into one another's faces.

"And supposing," said Lorinser at length, "I do not feel inclined to make use of these well-meant proposals, but that I prefer to go to the police tomorrow morning to inform them of the fact of my house having been broken into by a mad fellow who sought to intimidate me by threats, and to demand protection against his violence? For I certainly should not be prevented by certain private matters, which you apparently have reason for wishing to conceal, from taking measures to preserve myself from further molestation. I will have peace at any price."

"At *any* price? It might cost you dearer than you think. Or would you wish, in answer to this information against me, that a certain respected patroness of yours should prosecute you for embezzlement of money confided to you for charitable purposes?"

"Embezzlement!" cried Lorinser leaping to his feet, for the first time during the whole conversation dropping his mask and showing his true face distorted by

agitation. "Embezzlement!" he repeated. "What folly you talk! it only shows that you are not capable of understanding a nature such as mine. But no; you know as well as possible whom you have before you—one of the few who are called and chosen, who walk through the world drunk with the breath of the supersensual, and who are not able to keep to the straight high roads which are only made for the sober children of this world. What are money and goods to us?—a miserable, contemptible necessity, as worthless as other conditions of this grovelling body of ours! He who never rises above the dust may allow himself to be their slave, may take heed of his pence and hoard his farthings; but he who offers to the poor treasures by the handful,—treasures which neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, he who opens heaven to them, and raises them out of all trouble and sorrow into the fulness of eternal life,—is he to feel scruples about accepting something from them, the basest and vulgarest thing that one man can give to another, stamped metal or paper,—is he to reckon for his daily bread bit by bit with those who will remain his debtors to all eternity? Against such a one will you proceed for careless book-keeping, which to the shop-keeping souls of this world of trade appears the one sin against the Holy Ghost?"

"Bravo!" replied Mohr drily; "you have remembered your part well, and brought out all your little sayings capitally. Only it is less impressive to some audiences than to others. These magnificent views of the world and of money which you share with all interpreters of dreams, makers of gold, and false prophets from Mohammed down to these days, in which we see much the same thing repeated, this naïve assumption of inspired innocence, the possessor of which is nevertheless not so innocent but that he secures the best morsels for himself,—all this:—rather the quality of those who blindly follow you, and

think themselves blessed by being used by you for your own ends. *Volenti non fit injuria*. I hope you have learnt enough *jus* to understand that. The good professorin, on the other hand, who is neither in love with you nor on the same theological footing as yourself, and who has no wish to exchange hard cash for spiritual enlightenment, looks at the whole affair with the eyes of common honesty. I dare say you have some notion of what one means by honesty and good faith. The good creature is narrow-minded enough to think a good deal of these qualities, and she looks upon the man to whom she gave money for the poor, but who used it for his own necessities, and to the greater honour of God spent it on oysters and old Rhine wine, as a miserable swindler."

"You are a devil!" said Lorinser between his teeth.

"I never thought I was an angel," returned Mohr, preserving his tone of indifference. "But at all events I hope I am no *stupid* devil. You have seen," he continued again, taking out his Latakia, "that I am rather good at making cigarettes. If the specimen now about to be produced is completed before you have signified your agreement to my extremely moderate compromise, I go straight from this holy place to the profane dwelling of a counsellor of justice with whom I am acquainted—you do not smoke yourself? That's a pity! It is often very useful as a *contenance*. Blucher smoked in every battle."

A suppressed snort of rage came from the dark corner of the room into which the other had retired. Suddenly he rushed to the door and threw it wide open.

"Leave the room!" he shouted loud enough to be heard by any possible listeners in the adjoining room. "I shall take pretty good care that we never meet again."

"Thank you," replied Mohr, putting on his hat. "The cigarette is just finished. I knew that we should understand one another, *Intelligente pauca*. Oh, I beg—you are too polite; you need not trouble to

open the door for me. I know the law of all apparitions, that they must go out by the way they came in. There! I hope your devotions will not be again interrupted!"

Without bestowing another look upon him, he walked past his defeated foe with the most composed face in the world, while the latter stood at the door trembling in every member, and clenching his fists; as soon as Mohr was outside the door was closed violently, but he fancied he heard hollow groans of rage, such as a wild animal might utter who had fallen into a pit. A look of painfully bitter disgust passed over the strong face, and the lower lip was compressed contemptuously and at the same time sorrowfully. When he had reached the cool dark street he stood still and drew a long breath. He stretched out his muscular arms as if to throw off an intolerable load and closed his eyes for a moment.

"Where shall I go now?" broke from his lips. "Where shall I turn to find what is lost?—no, not lost for ever! If I must seek through the whole world I shall find her. I must, I *will* find her. Poor, poor woman! I will bring you peace, as far as a man has power against a devil!"

He walked a few steps thinking deeply. Suddenly he again stood still and passed his hand over his forehead.

"Good gracious," he said, "what has all this wickedness not made me forget? Why, the betrothal of Edwin and Lea was to take place to-night! I will go to it! I must see a few good people to restore my faith in humanity," and whistling the Adagio from the C Minor Symphony, his specific for washing a bitter taste out of his mouth, he turned his steps to the Zaunkönig's little house.

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